

DN disabilitynow

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Fight on as flyers barred

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has written to the government demanding air travel is brought under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), following a string of cases in which airlines have failed disabled passengers.

The final straw came in September, when nine blind and partially sighted passengers were ejected from a Ryanair flight to Italy, minutes before take-off, because the plane had reached a self-imposed "quota" of four disabled passengers per flight.

Ryanair denied being told months in advance that the nine were disabled, though it did admit to a "fault" at the check-in desk.

The incident sparked a furious row between the "no frills" airline and the DRC after Ryanair claimed the quota was agreed after advice from DRC

chairman Bert Massie when he was director of RADAR ten years ago. The DRC and RADAR hit back, saying the policy was agreed at a time before the DDA existed.

Mr Massie said the airline's policy of "wanting a fast turnaround at airports" was the main reason for their "policies against disabled people".

He told DN: "It is clear that the policy of working with airlines to improve their services voluntarily is not working.

"The DDA 2005 gives the government powers to include air travel within the provisions of the DDA and I have written to the secretary of state for transport asking him to use his powers to do so."

His call was backed by Chris Maule-Oatway, one of the passengers ejected from the Ryanair flight. It came as the European Parliament and European Council gave a first reading to



After the nightmare: The group trekking in the Italian Dolomites

proposed new European Union laws, which would prevent airlines stopping disabled passengers boarding flights and being charged for extra requirements.

The British Air Transport Association rejected the DRC's call, saying it was "unnecessary, given European legislation coming in" and the Department for

Transport, currently evaluating a voluntary air travel code of practice, said European laws would "pretty much involve everything the DDA would involve".

Ryanair also rejected calls for aviation to be added to the DDA, saying its policy had "been working fine for ten years".

CHAIR SMASHED

Virgin Atlantic managed to damage the wheelchair of disabled actress Julie Fernandez on a flight to New York – and then smash it up even more on her return flight.

Ms Fernandez was flying to the US with Virgin Atlantic for New York Fashion Week in September.

She said the airline seemed to "care very little" about the damage caused to her £2,500 wheelchair, which was "completely mashed up".

She added: "It's the flip-pant attitude. Trying to blame it on someone else – it's like they don't really care."

A Virgin spokeswoman said they would like to "sincerely apologise" and would reimburse Ms Fernandez for the damage and credit her with free frequent flyer miles.

Winter freeze fears

DN CAMPAIGN



Campaigners have called on the government to give winter fuel payments to severely disabled people after a double whammy of steep fuel price increases and warnings of the coldest winter in years.

The Meteorological Office said it produced its forecast of bitterly cold weather so health and safety organisations could prepare for the repercussions.

The government has ignored repeated calls from DN for an extension in winter fuel payments to severely disabled people under 60 since our campaign was launched six years ago.

Lorna Reith, chief executive of Disability Alliance, said: "If an announcement of the coldest winter in years is not

enough for them to take action, then how much do they really care about disabled people?"

She said it was "absolutely crucial" disabled people had enough money for fuel because many conditions required extra warmth. She cited research showing Disability Living Allowance was not adequate to cover all costs, forcing some disabled people to choose between a healthy diet and warmth.

Inclusion Scotland was to ask the disabled people's minister, Anne McGuire, to introduce the payments as DN went to press.

Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, also demanded a "comprehensive winter fuel payment system" to protect disabled people.

He said: "My fear is that, as they can't afford the escalating costs of fuel, many will be

unable to [keep warm]."

DN reader Carla Lovejoy, from Kent, said: "What is wrong with these decision makers? My nan gets the payment, which is not means-tested, although she is loaded!"

Labour MP Roger Berry said the government's past response had been "disappointing", but his new winter fuel payment early day motion* had already been signed by nearly 100 MPs.

A Department for Work and Pensions spokeswoman admitted there were about 2,300 "excess winter deaths" of people under 65 every year, but the government had no plans to extend payments.

She said extra help was provided through DLA and income-related benefits for the poorest disabled people.

*Ask your MP to sign EDM 276



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On the cover: Wheelchair basketball star Ade Adepitan and student Sophie Morgan take time out to enjoy the Nicaraguan landscape. The pair joined nine other disabled people to trek a gruelling 220 miles across Central America for BBC2's *Beyond Boundaries*. Profile, pages 24-25

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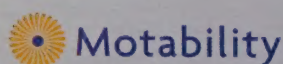
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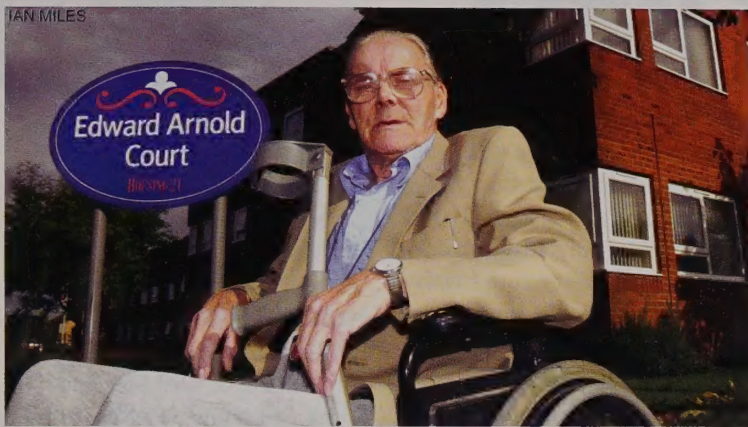
BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

A disabled man faces possible eviction after refusing to stop putting out a newsletter criticising his sheltered accommodation complex.

Wheelchair user Derek Jones, 77, moved into Housing 21's Edward Arnold Court in Bedford in April.

In early May, he started publishing a fortnightly newsletter outlining complaints such as dripping overflow pipes, a lack of ventilation for paint fumes and a hosepipe trailed through corridors "for elderly people to trip on".

Managers told Mr Jones in July that he could not continue



Derek Jones: his newsletters detail dripping pipes and paint fumes

producing the newsletter because it was disturbing other residents. But he continued distributing his newsletter and last month received another letter warning that he might be

served with an eviction notice if he did not stop.

Mr Jones claims managers are trying to stop him from telling the truth.

He said: "They don't want

to be exposed. We've reached a situation where people are scared to speak out."

A Housing 21 spokeswoman confirmed Mr Jones had received the notice of possible eviction, but said that his newsletters were "factually incorrect and upsetting to the residents".

Another resident and chairman of the Tenants Association, George Lambert, said Mr Jones should use official complaints procedures to resolve issues. He added: "He's caused so much havoc since he's been here. This chap has come in and he's decided he wants to be the one-man band for Edward Arnold Court."



Pretty in pink: Deaf actress Rebecca Anne Whitney vamps it up in her first television acting role, as *Grange Hill*'s new lower sixth former – 16-year-old Holly Parsons.

Higher payments for Thalidomide survivors

EXCLUSIVE BY PRIYA KOTECHA

Thalidomide survivors could secure a substantial increase in their annual compensation payments if negotiations between representatives and the company now responsible for the drug prove successful.

Thalidomide UK and the Thalidomide Trust are in talks with Diageo about a proposed annual increase from the current £2.8 million a year to £6.5 mil-

lion a year for the next 31 years.

Individual amounts will depend on cost of living and the severity of impairments of the 455 survivors.

Dr Martin Johnson, director of the Thalidomide Trust, said: "We hope to reach an agreement shortly on the details."

Diageo – which took over Distillers, the company that produced Thalidomide – said it hoped to conclude an agreement by Christmas.

DRC blasts health inequalities

People with mental health problems and learning difficulties are much more likely to have certain chronic health conditions, according to early findings from a Disability Rights Commission (DRC) formal investigation.

People with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder are more than twice as likely to have diabetes or epilepsy and people with learning difficulties are twice as likely to have diabetes.

The initial findings of the DRC's investigation into health inequalities faced by people with learning difficulties and mental

health problems also reveal they are less likely to receive some routine health services.

In Wales, the take-up rate for cervical smear tests for women with learning difficulties is only 13 per cent, compared with 84 per cent across GP practices.

And more than half of people with a learning difficulty or mental health problem experience difficulties when visiting their GP, such as inaccessible information or staff focusing on their impairment.

The release of the interim findings* came at the launch of

a three-month independent inquiry into how GPs and other primary care services are tackling this "health crisis".

The panel will hear evidence from medical and nursing professionals. Findings will feed into the final report next June.

Bert Massie, chair of the DRC, said: "What is certain is that the inequalities and poorer health cannot be explained by the learning disability or the mental health problem alone."

*Available at www.drc-gb.org or free from the DRC helpline, tel: 08457 622 633

Gulf veteran battles for war pension

A Gulf War veteran is bidding to have Gulf War Syndrome recognised as a disease and so win his battle for a war pension.

If successful in his appeal against the Ministry of Defence's refusal to give him a war pension, Daniel Martin and thousands of others like him could claim the benefit for illnesses they attribute to their service in the Gulf conflicts.

He and his supporters hope an admission from a government lawyer during the hearing will lead to victory in the case.

Steven Kovats, counsel for the secretary of state for defence, told the hearing that doctors had been using the term Gulf War Syndrome. But the government does not accept that that means the syndrome exists.

The result of the Pensions Appeal Tribunal hearing is expected later this month.

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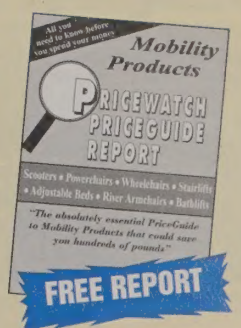
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Floating voter: Boris Johnson, the Conservative MP for Henley, helped launch a new accessible boat* that can be driven from a wheelchair. Tomi Coburn, 95, is pictured driving the £10,000 Mobiboat – believed to be the first vessel of its kind – which can carry six people.
* Tel: 01491 873 126 or see: www.thameselectric.com

Dying bill limits

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

The author of the controversial bill on assisted dying could make fundamental changes to his proposals, a House of Lords debate heard last month.

Lord Joffe's Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill aims to legalise voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide for terminally ill people. But he told the debate that he might rule out voluntary euthanasia and limit the bill, due in November, to legalising assisted suicide.

He said seven of the 13 members of the Lords committee that examined his original proposals would support a bill limiting it to assisted suicide, which would allow doctors to pre-



scribe lethal medication administered by patients themselves.

Lord Joffe told the debate: "This bill is not about disability in general...it is about terminally ill patients only, all of whom will be fully protected, to the extent that protection may be necessary, by the safeguards in the bill."

But Baroness Wilkins (above), who is disabled and opposes the

bill, said: "I have had many conversations with my disabled friends, who genuinely fear going into hospital if they have an acute period of illness and need intensive medical care, and that they will meet the prejudice of doctors who are imbued with society's prejudice that their lives are not equal to others and that it would be better to be dead than to be disabled."

Baroness Finlay, who also opposes the bill, said: "Doctors who care day in, day out, for dying patients know that, whatever was the case 30 years ago, you no longer need to kill the patient to kill the pain."

Lord Warner, for the government, said it continued to hold a neutral position on the bill.

Non-disabled boss is new driving force

A non-disabled chief executive has been appointed to head up Mobilise, the new organisation formed by the merger of the country's two largest disabled drivers' charities.

Pamela Morrissey (right) started work in September, following the decision to merge the Disability Drivers' Association (DDA) and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (DDMC).

She said that being non-disabled did not have to be a dis-



advantage in running Mobilise, but that it was important for her to have the right team around her.

She added: "All the trustees of both charities are disabled,

so they know what they're talking about."

Ms Morrissey spent 12 years working for three national charities – Age Concern, the British Deaf Association and Contact the Elderly.

The DDA and DDMC agreed to merge this summer, more than 40 years after they first discussed joining forces.

The merger was backed by 94 per cent of the charities' 30,000 members.

Services respect call

Services must go even further to help disabled people and other disadvantaged groups improve their quality of life, according to a new report from the government's Social Exclusion Unit.

The report is the first in a series to examine how education, employment, housing and health services are working and can be improved.

It called for "two-way respect" between service users and providers.

Services should focus on areas such as communication, awareness of front-line staff, advocacy

and building service-users' confidence, said the report.

Lesley Doherty, of Side by Side Peer Advocacy Service, which was cited by the report as an example of good practice, said: "It's about recognising that people need to be involved in every step of their life. Then they feel in control."

A final report with cross-government agreed actions will be published in 2006.

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'Come out over disability' – DRC

BY JOHN PRING

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has suggested that more disabled people in public life could "come out" about their impairments.

The DRC says in a discussion paper that if more well-known people "came out" it might help "refashion perceptions of disabled people".

Research suggests that prejudice and discrimination have led some disabled people to hide their impairments.

The paper, issued as part of the DRC's Disability Debate*, says there are about eight disabled members of the Welsh National Assembly, but only two have made their disability public.

It adds: "More politicians and other figures in public life who are disabled or living with long-term health conditions could be encouraged to go 'on the record' about what it has meant to them and how it has shaped their world view and opportunities."

Labour MP Anne Begg, who

is disabled, said it could be helpful for more public figures to discuss their own impairments, but it had to be their decision.

She said there was still a risk of people facing discrimination once it was known they were disabled.

And she said it was important that a disabled achiever was not seen as a "brave battling soul who has overcome adversity".

*www.drc.org.uk/disabilitydebate



Thriving garden: John Hodgson only took up gardening when he and his wife moved into a new cottage in Cornwall – and realised the garden was much bigger than they had thought. Mr Hodgson, who is blind, won the "new to gardening" category of the first Blind Gardener of the Year competition, organised by Thrive and RNIB.

Ten-year sentence backed

DN CAMPAIGN

Social services chiefs have backed our calls for maximum sentences of ten years for those who abuse adults with learning difficulties and mental health problems.

Sue Fiennes, adult protection spokeswoman for the Association of Directors of Social Services, was speaking at the launch of its new national standards on neglect and abuse of vulnerable adults in England*.

The framework aims to help local authorities prevent and

deal with adult abuse.

But she admitted the framework did not include any mention of the offences of ill-treatment and neglect, a key way to prosecute abusers.

Ms Fiennes, director of children's services for Herefordshire County Council, said the ADSS wanted sentences that "paralleled" the ten year sentences for similar offences against children.

The government has so far only agreed to raise the maximum sentence for adult abuse to five years.

*www.adss.org.uk

Benefit fraud plans unveiled

Disabled people should expect "flexibility of support in and out of work", according to David Blunkett, the work and pensions secretary.

Just weeks before his expected green paper on reform of welfare and incapacity benefit (IB), Mr Blunkett launched eight "principles of welfare reform".

He said they were underpinned by the belief that "work is the best route out of welfare".

Under its new system, the government will enable people "to make choices for themselves" but also "recognise the need for support and care

where appropriate".

Every Jobcentre Plus district manager will look at developing partnerships with the community and voluntary sector and introduce "additional flexible approaches, such as mentoring".

But John Knight, head of policy at Leonard Cheshire, said: "The real key principle for reform of IB was not included in Mr Blunkett's list. That principle must be to increase the basic rate of benefit so that disabled people who rely on benefits can be helped out of poverty."

The Department for Work and Pensions also announced a

new strategy for tackling benefit fraud, which will cross-check information given by claimants against that provided to financial companies. It will also use "cutting edge private sector techniques" to "identify suspect cases" in telephone claims.

Stephen Brookes, chair of the disabled members council of the National Union of Journalists, warned this "divisive action" would "further stigmatise and demean those who already struggle to be accepted".



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In brief

Cash squeeze worry

Social service bosses have demanded more government cash to pay for services for people with learning difficulties.

A report* said chiefs were becoming "steadily more alarmed" over cash pressures.

*Pressures on learning disabilities services, tel: 020 7072 7433, www.adss.org.uk

Ken-do attitude

London Mayor Ken Livingstone has settled a legal dispute over access with the landlord of his own headquarters (DN, February 2004).

Mr Livingstone had been unhappy that disabled people could not be dropped off at the front of City Hall by car.

Work started last month on a new turning circle to resolve the problem.

Disabled kids lose in childcare lottery

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Inconsistent training and gaps in good practice are a major concern within childcare for disabled children, Ofsted has warned.

In its report*, the education watchdog says quality of provision varies widely across England depending on levels of training, support from local authorities and attitudes of providers.

"As a result, services for children with special needs depend on where they live, not on what they need," the report says.

Ofsted inspectors visited 42 groups and reported that even nurseries rated as "good or outstanding" were barely able to provide adequate care for disabled children.

The report says local authorities should raise awareness of educational guidance and improve staff training.

Anne-Marie Hall (right), deputy director of the National Deaf Children's Society, said that without proper early years support, a deaf child's social and educational development can be greatly affected.

She added: "We have noticed



that parents are finding provision varies depending on where they live. In some areas, a nursery may not have had experience of deaf children and will not know what support they can provide. Other areas may have a very co-ordinated approach."

* Removing barriers: a "can-do" attitude, only available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications

Subtitling uni course

The UK's first MA programme in audio description and subtitling has been launched at the University of Surrey.

The one-year course will equip students with the skills to subtitle and audio-describe films and TV programmes.

Audio description ensures blind people do not miss details like facial expressions, body language, costumes or scenery.

Margaret Rogers, director of the university's Centre for Translation Studies, said: "The concept of translation is broadening." She said rising sales of DVDs and increased Ofcom targets created a need for the new MA course.

She added: "There are quite tough targets for subtitling on TV, which are ratcheted up every two to three years."



Good sport: New pupil Mary Suggett meets Princess Anne to mark the opening of the Percy Hedley Sports Academy in North Tyneside. She is accompanied by the academy's chief executive Jim Ferris. The £1m academy is part of a campaign to provide better disabled sports facilities in the North East.

Not so independent living

People with mobility impairments visiting one of the UK's largest independent living exhibitions were confronted with a notice telling them they could not use one of the venue's restaurants.

Visitors wishing to eat at the Palace Suite Restaurant, in the basement of Alexandra Palace in north London, could technically access it via a lift, but had to pass a sign which read: "Due to health and safety and access issues, the above areas are not fully accessible."

Organisers at Emap Healthcare said they put the notice there to warn visitors of the health and safety risk.

In the event of a fire or emer-

Palace Suite Restaurant

Due to Health & Safety and access issues, the above areas are not fully accessible.

Accessible catering points are located around the halls. Please ask if you need help

Access blunder: the sign in Alexandra Palace

gency evacuation, the lift would have been out of operation.

Emma Yandell, head of Rehab events at Emap Healthcare, said: "We had to choose between closing the restaurant completely or leaving it open for visitors who could

access it, to help relieve the catering facilities on the floor above. We consulted with several disabled people who said it was ok to leave it open.

"I would appreciate any feedback or complaints from your readers so we can address these issues in time for the exhibition next year."*

Other complaints included delays in the shuttle service, which ferried passengers from the car park to the main entrance. There was also a shortage of portable accessible toilet facilities, installed by organisers after the venue's own toilets were deemed inaccessible.

*Email Emma Yandell at emma.yandell@emap.com

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In brief

Parents' battle

The parents of disabled two-year-old Charlotte Wyatt, from Portsmouth, were waiting to hear whether a court order allowing doctors not to ventilate their daughter artificially would be overturned as DN went to press.

The Wyatts lost an appeal in August, but new medical evidence suggests Charlotte's quality of life has improved. Justice Hedley was due to give a ruling on 21 October.

Blunkett blunder

David Blunkett has broken Parliamentary rules by using House of Commons notepaper to complain about a proposed property development near one of his homes in south London.

The development, which would help fund a local school for blind and partially sighted people, would have a negative impact on local wildlife and ecology, said Mr Blunkett, who is blind himself.

DRC in bar fight

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is set to support its second legal case under the Disability Discrimination Act's physical access duties.

It is supporting the case against the Spirit Group, which owns 2,400 pubs across the UK, over the lack of an accessible toilet at The Shirley Inn in Croydon.

The DRC recently supported a physical access case against Debenhams.

Vaccine backed

An international team of researchers has found "no credible evidence" that the MMR vaccine can cause autism or Crohn's disease.

The review by members of The Cochrane Collaboration, a UK-based international charity, analysed evidence from 31 high quality studies from around the world.

It also pointed out that the lack of confidence in the combined mumps, measles and rubella vaccine had caused "great damage" to public health.

Funds First

The Big Lottery Fund's Strategic Programme has granted £208,500 to People First, a national charity run by and for people with learning difficulties.

The money will be used to develop the campaigning and fundraising work of self-advocacy groups and individuals.

Fears for factories

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

A new report has raised questions over the long-term future of Remploy's 83 factory businesses, after it concluded that many of them were not good value for taxpayers' money.

The National Audit Office (NAO) report*, which examined how the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) helped disabled people find and retain work, says most of Remploy's factories "struggle to be competitive" due to a decline in manufacturing across the UK.

The NAO recommends that Remploy, the UK's largest employer of disabled people, uses more of its £115 million funding grant to develop newer

employment schemes, such as Interwork, which puts disabled people into mainstream jobs.

Bob Warner, Remploy's chief executive, said: "The issues raised by the report have important implications for Remploy's future direction. We will need to consider them carefully before we are in a position to respond."

The GMB trade union representative for Remploy, Phil Davies, expressed concern over the report, saying: "The jobs offered on Interwork are on the lower end of the skill range – most of them in retail. The factories have better quality work."

*Gaining and retaining a job: the DWP's support for disabled people, tel: 0845 702 3474 or www.nao.org.uk



By George: Wallace and Gromit pose for the paparazzi with Gulf War veteran Allen Parton and his assistance dog Endal at a showing of *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* at the opening of the Schools Film Festival in Leicester Square. Endal, who has graced the pages of DN several times, holds the highest award for animal bravery in peacetime – the Animal George Cross.

Anger as council OKs parking bay abuse

DN CAMPAIGN



A Baywatch campaigner has criticised a "diabolical" council for allowing contractors to park in disabled bays.

Alexander Rhind, from Nottinghamshire, found a van owned by refuse management

firm Cory Environmental (CE) parked in one of three disabled bays at a car park in Westcliff-on-Sea this summer, despite other bays being available.

The company, which carries out recycling and street-cleaning for the council, was told it could park in disabled bays by Southend-on-Sea Borough

Council, but only if all the 160 "normal" bays were occupied.

Mr Rhind said: "If CE and the Borough Council condone the use of disabled bays by commercial vans, how can you expect the general public to have any respect for the disabled?"

A CE spokesman said: "After this incident, we have made it

clear our staff must not use disabled bays when others are available. Where this has happened we can only apologise."

But a council spokesman said CE vehicles could park "as near to where they needed to work as possible, including in disabled parking bays".

● See feature, page 26

Blind clubber told: Leave the stick behind

A blind actress from Leeds claims she was refused entrance to a nightclub because door staff said her white stick was a potential hazard.

Sarah Caltieri, 26, was told she could only enter The Space nightclub in Leeds if she agreed to leave her stick behind, she says.

Ms Caltieri, who has used the aid since she became blind three years ago, refused the offer and left the club.

The RNIB is now investigating the incident, which happened in September, on her behalf and said it would provide legal support and advice to take a court case if needed.

An RNIB spokesman said: "We are glad that Ms Caltieri came to us and we are happy to support her."

Despite several attempts to speak to management at The Space, no one was available to comment.



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New sign for BSL

BY JOHN PRING

The British Deaf Association* (BDA) began its national Learn to Sign Week by launching a new British Sign Language (BSL) logo.

The logo (*below right*) can be used as a sticker to show that a service is accessible to BSL users.

During the week, other BSL events included:

- BDA launched its new Video Relay Service, which BSL users with a videophone and internet connection can use to communicate with hearing people using a standard telephone, via a live video interpreter.
- Recognising good practise in action, the BDA presented an award to Bristol City Council for improving access for deaf BSL users.
- At City Hall, London's deputy mayor, Nicky Gavron, launched another video relay service. The SignVideo Contact Centre** has been set up by Significan't, a social enterprise run by BSL users and funded by

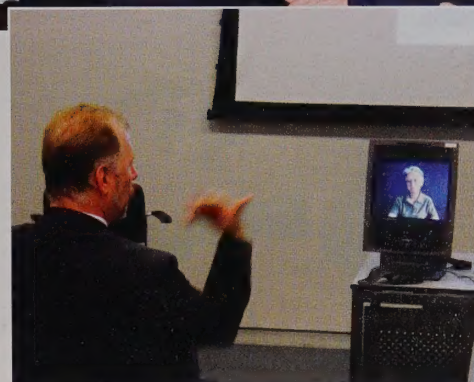


the Greater London Authority and the government's e-Innovations programme.

- Residents in Islington, north London, now have access to the best-resourced sign language interpreting service in the country. The service boasts one full-time and three new part-time interpreters, and from last month provides interpreting for all primary care trusts as well as council services.

- Finally, the Disabled Living

Talk of the town: (*above*) interpreters Debbie Conway, Hetty May Bailey and Helen Ryan with deaf Islington residents Chris Hayden and Miro Civin; (*right*) SignVideo in action



Foundation used its first Deaf Awareness Day during Learn to Sign Week to launch a new card that residents of Westminster can use to show people they are deaf or hard of hearing.

* www.signcommunity.org.uk
 ** tel: 020 8463 1120, fax: 020 8463 1121, ISDN videophone: 020 8463 1140, IP video: signvideo.dyndns.tv, web: www.significant-online.co.uk

Sign language study greeted with open arms

Deaf campaigners have welcomed an "exciting" new centre that is embarking on a ten-year study of sign language and deaf communication.

The Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre at University College London has been awarded £4.5 million to fund the first half of the study.

The centre will be the first of its kind in the world and will research sign language, linguistics, psychology and deaf communication.

It will train deaf scientists and work with organisations like the British Deaf Association (BDA), the Royal Association for Deaf People and RNID.

A spokesperson for BDA said it was "delighted" to see the "exciting initiative".

"We are pleased that this programme will study our language, set within the wider context of our own cultural values and identity as a unique cultural group."

Centre director Professor Bencie Woll said: "By studying deaf people's language we will be able to illuminate all aspects of human communication."



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Rights Act call

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

Disabled people should use the Human Rights Act to challenge the barriers they face, according to a campaigner at this year's National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) annual conference.

The Human Rights and Disabled People conference in Birmingham last month advised disabled people to use human rights laws to secure independent living centres in every area by 2010, as detailed in the government's *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* strategy unit report.

Camilla Parker, an independent disability and human rights consultant, said: "We need to look at how we can use



the Human Rights Act to enable people to challenge the barriers they face in relation to day-to-day living."

David Morris, joint chair of NCIL, who leads the Mayor of London's disability rights agenda, said disabled people must start to ensure that public service providers fulfil their legal duty to promote equality of opportunity, when the duty comes into effect next year.

He said: "We need to fight and ensure through the public sector duty that local authori-

ties are really pushed to the limit on what they should be doing in terms of their disability equality schemes."

Rachel Hurst (left), director of Disability Awareness in Action, said that in an age where the government was "squeezing human rights off the agenda", it was up to disabled people "to fight an increasingly disablist and horrendous society".

Meanwhile, a new campaign to challenge the language used to describe disabled people was launched at the conference by Independent Living Alternatives – a user-led disability organisation. It aims to replace phrases such as "at risk" and "vulnerable adults" with positive messages such as "I am in control".



Yaptop: Hollyoaks stars Matt Milburn (second from right) and Ashley Taylor Dawson (right) helped launch YAP, Mencap's new lifestyle website, designed by and for young people with learning difficulties. They were joined by two of the designers, Jamie Dancyger and Sarah Baker. www.y-a-p.org.uk

Majority lead happy lives, says poll

More than three-quarters of adults with learning difficulties are happy with their lives, according to a national survey.

But the first ever poll* of adults with learning difficulties who live in England also found that one in four could be living in unsuitable accommodation and less than one in five had a paid job, compared with over two-thirds of men and more than half of women of working age in the general population.

Nearly a third of nearly 3,000 adults questioned did not feel

safe using public transport, and a similar number said someone had been rude or offensive to them in the last year because they had learning difficulties.

The survey was carried out by BMRB Social Research, Lancaster University, and members of Central England People First (CEPF).

Ian Davies and Karen Spencer, from CEPF, said in the report: "The survey shows that a lot of people are worried, feel left out, feel helpless and lack confidence."

But Mr Davies said life had improved for people with learning difficulties since the government's 2001 white paper, *Valuing People*. "I believe people's lives are a lot better. They enjoy their lives the way they are but they would like to see change in their life."

**Adults with Learning Difficulties in England*, free, tel: 0845 300 6016, www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs

New cash to open up education funding

Two disability charities have won £50,000 for a joint project aimed at helping disabled people access education and improve their job prospects.

Skill, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, and Disability Alliance (DA) will use the money from the Lloyds TSB Foundation to develop training courses for student advisors and improve links between their websites.

The training will focus on making disabled people aware

of educational funding and how to develop their future careers.

Lorna Reith, chief executive of DA, which focuses on benefits issues for disabled people, said: "Up until now, if you were a student you'd have to go to Skill to ask about that side of things, and then to us. The idea is to move towards a one-stop shop."

Ms Reith said pilot training courses should be up and running by the spring.

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In brief

Limb growth project

A new £10 million initiative aims to research treatments that could allow people to regrow damaged limbs.

The joint venture between the University of Manchester and The Healing Foundation Centre will also try to develop treatments to heal wounds without leaving scars.

Pills to be avoided

Children and young people with mild depression should never be offered antidepressants, according to new NHS guidelines.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence also said children and young people with moderate to severe depression should initially be offered at least three months of psychological therapy.

Frustration over care differences

BY JOHN PRING

The husband of a disabled woman sent home three times from an "appalling" hospital has compared her experience with the treatment she received at a second nearby hospital, which carried out a thorough series of tests over 12 days.

Joanna Barnes, who had a stroke when she was 16 and also has epilepsy, arrived by ambulance at William Harvey Hospital in Kent (right) on August Bank Holiday Monday. She was complaining of severe pains in her chest, back, left arm and head, and had two epileptic seizures in the ambulance.

But her husband, David, said that, following a long wait, she



was examined briefly and then sent home and told to take a painkiller.

Two days later, he brought her back to the hospital, part of East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust. Staff returned her yet again two days later.

Each time, Mrs Barnes was sent home after just an ECG test, and was told to take a painkiller.

Two days later, Mr Barnes took his wife to Maidstone

District General Hospital, which admitted her and carried out a battery of tests over the next 12 days. She was later admitted to St Thomas' Hospital in London for further tests.

Mr Barnes said: "Why is the care in one hospital so poor and the other hospital is great? I wouldn't call an ambulance next time. I would drive her to Maidstone."

A spokeswoman for East Kent Hospitals said they could not comment on specific cases due to patient confidentiality, but "believe this patient was cared for appropriately".

She added that the trust was "sorry if at any time Joanna was unhappy with any aspect of her treatment".

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Equality for doc schools

Three medical schools have devised a new framework to help teach healthcare students to overcome negative attitudes towards disabled people.

Researchers on the Partners in Practice project spent three years consulting patients, healthcare professionals and teaching staff, many of whom were disabled.

They concluded that healthcare students were rarely taught about disability equality.

The project developed new advice* which is hoped will improve the training of doctors, nurses, dentists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, midwives and radiographers.

Findings will be made available to other institutions.

**Different Differences: disability equality teaching in healthcare education*, www.bristol.ac.uk/pip



Pain in the frame: Professor Al Aynsley-Green, the Children's Commissioner, has called for pain management to be put "at the centre of the treatment of sick children". He was supporting the Global Day Against Children's Pain* last month. Pictured is Jude, eight, a patient at Great Ormond Street Hospital, who had a temporary tattoo on his arm to help tell his mum or nurses about his pain level following orthopaedic surgery. *www.iasp-pain.org

Kids' dental information lacking

Many families find it difficult to access information about the dental services their disabled children need, according to a new report*.

The disability charity Contact a Family (CF) found that NHS Direct and primary care trusts are often unable to tell families how to secure suitable dental treatment for their disabled children.

Parents are frequently forced to "do their own detective work" to track down the best treatment options.

Many high street practices

are not accessible to disabled children, so families usually contact the Community Dental Service (CDS). Some areas report CDS vacancy rates of up to 20 per cent.

But researchers also found that three-fifths of families are happy with the dental treatment their child received.

Jill Harrison, director of external affairs for CF, said: "Although the families we spoke to were largely satisfied with the treatment their child had received, many had experienced difficulties in finding out

what services were available and where." She added "serious investment" was "urgently needed" if the CDS was not to be "completely overwhelmed".

She also called for all dental practices to become more accessible to disabled children.

The British Dental Association backed the calls for better information.

**Free summaries of Open Wide?*, from CF's helpline, tel: 0808 808 3555 or email: helpline@cafamilly.org.uk. For a copy of the full report at £5, tel: 020 7608 8700

Record ride

BY PRIYA KOTECHEA

Paralympian Sarah Bailey broke her own world record for disabled cyclists in the women's 3,000m pursuit at the National Track Championships in Manchester, less than two months after joining the sport.

The Paralympic swimmer and now cyclist set a time of 3min 39.329secs in the qualifying round and finished seventh in the final race against many of the sport's greatest non-disabled riders last month.

Bailey broke her own previous record set at the European Championships in August by two seconds and entered the record books as the first disabled female rider to complete the distance in less than four minutes.

She said: "It's just a shock to be so high up in the world so soon. I only got on the bike to keep fit when I got an ear infection earlier this year and I've already achieved so much."

"It's funny because when I started swimming 14 years ago, I broke the world record on my debut at the 1992 Paralympic Games in Barcelona, so it was déjà vu to break the cycling record at the National Track Championships."

Bailey also came 11th in the 500m time trial. She must now decide which sport she will commit to, but is determined



Saddle star: Sarah Bailey rides to action in Manchester

to become a full-time cyclist one day.

Other pace-setters included Barney Storey and Anthony Kapp, who broke the world record for disabled cyclists in the 200-metre tandem sprint, clocking a time of 10.604secs.

Meanwhile, cyclists Aileen McGlyn and Darren Kenny

have both been nominated for two awards each at the inaugural Paralympic Awards.

Both are nominees for the "best games debut" title, while McGlyn appears on the short-list for best female athlete and Kenny for best male athlete. The awards will be presented on 19 November.

Table tennis gold for Gilroy

Wheelchair table tennis star Sue Gilroy secured a brace of medals at the European Wheelchair Table Tennis Championships in Jesolo, Italy, last month.

Gilroy improved on her performance two years ago in

Zagreb, when she won silver, capturing gold in the class four category, beating Slovakian Maria Pillarova into second place.

She then took bronze in the class four team event, accompanying fellow Brit Claire Harris.

Other winners included James Rawson, who retained his class three team gold title, along with Arnie Chan. Chan went on to bag silver in the class three singles, while Athens bronze medallist Cathy Mitton took silver in the class 1/2 event.

Tennis teen tops the table

Teenager Zara Jurenko (*right*) won her second successive ladies singles title at the National Learning Disabilities Tennis Event held at the City of Nottingham tennis centre last month.

The 18-year-old Leicestershire player topped her group, winning 6-0 against Lucy Pethig, Sarah Simpson and Katherine Ashcroft.

Players were put into groups according to their impairment and played one set against each opponent. Jurenko won the toughest group.

Jurenko, who won gold at this year's Special Olympics National Summer Games, went on to pair up with fellow Leicestershire player Thomas Styles to win the hardest of the



mixed doubles groups, including a 6-1 victory over their nearest rivals Sarah Joy Simpson and Wesley Edge.

Meanwhile, David McKechnie also made his mark on the tournament, after defeats of Chris Burke (6-1) and Steven Harries (6-3), to win the toughest men's group.

Weir we go again

Wheelchair athletes David Weir and Shelly Woods bagged a medal each at the Great South Run in Portsmouth last month.

Weir crossed the line two minutes ahead of fellow Brit men Tushar Patel, who came second, and Kenny Heriot, third, completing the ten mile course in 35mins 15secs. Woods clocked a time of 44mins 1sec.

The successes came after record-breaking performances by the two celebrated long-dis-

tance athletes in the Great North Run in September.

Both Weir and Woods set new course records in the wheelchair races, with times of 42mins 35secs and 50mins 7secs respectively.

Weir crossed the line 1min 50secs faster than David Holding's mark of 44min 25secs, while Woods shaved over two minutes from the women's best, previously set by Tanni Grey Thompson.

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GIVE YOUR LIFE A LIFT

The pain of a

An increasing number of disabled people's organisations are feeling the financial pinch as funding dries up. Elizabeth Choppin asks where has the cash gone, and what are the implications?

In recent months, DN has run a string of stories about funding cuts and reallocation of cash across a range of sectors. Education provision, health, the arts and social care are just a few of the areas where services are feeling the squeeze. This has caused concern among disabled people over levels of future support.

There have been suggestions that the cuts mirror a general economic downturn, but overall budgets are actually increasing in many areas – although apparently not to the benefit of disabled people.

On the contrary, across the country people are being charged more for services by local authorities than ever before. At the same time, disabled people's organisations that have provided services for years are closing down because contracts have ended or funding has been withdrawn.

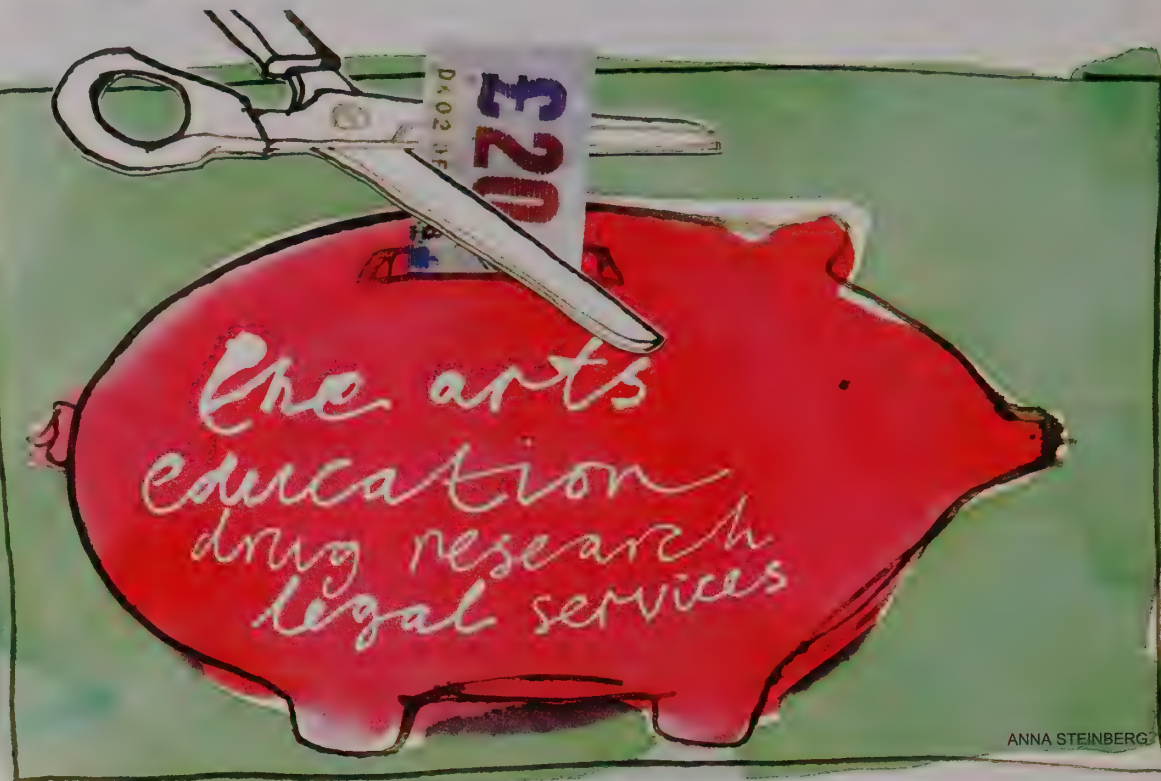
The problem has caused disabled people in Southampton to organise a national conference on the subject, due to take place as DN went to press.

Ian Loynes, a co-ordinator for the Southampton Centre for Independent Living, suggests that reduced funding and a lack of accountability between central and local government is damaging people's ability to live independently.

Social services only fund at an "existence level", he says, adding, "people are effectively being institutionalised in their own homes. That is not what living in a community is about".

"Organisations for disabled people are having their funding threatened daily," he adds.

With all these problems, Mr Loynes says: "Local authorities blame central government, and central government blames local authorities, but it's



Note problem: Funding across a range of services is being cut – and disabled people are paying the price

disabled people who lose out. Central government has the power to force local authorities to address these issues."

Unfortunately, central government's lead is not an inspiring one. It was Westminster that decided to halt Independent Living Fund (ILF) payments during appeals to disabled people who have been told their Disability Living

Allowance (DLA) is being downgraded or removed (DN, October). Although payments are resumed and backdated if DLA appeals are successful, the length of the appeals processes is unacceptable, campaigners say.

Lorna Reith, chief executive of Disability Alliance, is worried about the impact the move will have on independent living and says there must be an option where ILF payments can continue during the appeals process with a "phased

withdrawal" of the benefit so disabled people do not lose money overnight.

Ms Reith also has problems with funding cuts much closer to home. The alliance's advice service on benefits for disabled people was closed earlier this year due to reductions in government funding.

The Department of Health says it cannot fund every one of the proposals it receives each year, but Ms Reith feels disabled people really need an



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Disabled children's services and disabled people's arts have also been affected. The mental health group Survivor's Poetry, and respite service Kidz First in Hereford have both faced drastic funding cuts this year.

Kidz First director Sharon Weston says the group is surviving solely on private donations after losing £39,000 of government money, and were never told why the money was pulled. "The funding squeeze is going to leave so many people without anything.

"Although we've got all these policies locally and nationally saying 'every child counts', it seems to be every child except ones with disabilities," she says.

Disabled people are also being affected by cuts in the medical sector. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) has scrapped one of its three drug appraisal committees after it was told to make £3.5 million worth of cuts (*DN, October*). As a consequence, appraisals of new drugs for people with cancer, arthritis and diabetes will be delayed over the next two years – with a possibility of longer delays in the future.

Martin Jones, campaign manager for Arthritis Care,

says: "Effective drug treatments can help people manage their condition better, continue with their everyday life, including going to work and pain relief. It is extremely disappointing to hear of delays caused by funding restrictions."

Changes in use of funds have also upset campaigners. A nationwide axing of further

'Local authorities blame central government, and central government blames local authorities, but it's disabled people who lose out'

education courses for people with learning difficulties (*DN, October*) has attracted much criticism. Experts blame the government's increased funding for 16-plus education, which resulted in a cut of three per cent in cash for 19-plus education.

David Congdon, head of campaigns and policy at Mencap, explains that colleges are choosing to scrap courses that do not lead to qualifications. He says the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) should do more to help.

But David Hughes, an LSC regional director who has been reviewing provision for people with learning difficulties, says:

"There is a fear that some courses might be keeping people busy instead of progressing their learning."

Mr Congdon condemns this way of thinking, saying it would be a tragedy if education for people with learning difficulties was "fobbed off as a social care issue". He adds: "They [people with learning difficulties] should be able to get an education relevant to their own achievement levels."

Theresa Villiers, MP for Chipping Barnet, raised the issue in parliament and helped to secure additional funding for a programme in her constituency. "We'll always have to be vigilant given that the government has this inflexible, targeted approach to funding," she explains.

Whatever the sector, mounting funding pressures are already affecting disabled people. And ahead of what may be a key meeting in the battle to challenge the cuts, Mr Loynes says the issue is ultimately a rights one. "It's about asking 'do we want disabled people to have a certain standard of life?' Funding should take second priority to people's rights."

DUMPED BY THE SYSTEM: Joanna Boddington

Joanna, 33, who has learning difficulties and a visual impairment, has attended Preston College in Lancashire for many years.

In August, Joanna was informed that her computer skills and music classes, along with a host of other classes for people with learning difficulties, would be cancelled due to a shift in government funding. This left her with only one weekly class in cookery at another local college.

Joanna says: "I really enjoyed my classes. My teacher John taught me how to use computers even with my eyesight problems."

"I get a lot of benefit out of it. John knows me very well and I'm used to working with him. I don't want to stop college – I don't think that would be wise," she says.

Joanna's mother, Janet, says that the cancellations will have a negative impact on the quality of Joanna's life.

"Jo is devastated by this



loss as she was learning in this class. As she has complex disabilities, learning is very difficult but she was motivated. Her small, but now shrinking, presence in the community is important to her and radically affects her self-confidence and self-esteem."

Janet says she feels the further education system has "dumped my daughter".

She adds: "All her life I have fought her corner. Life was hard enough when she had a right to education. But 18-plus, as you know, there is little out there for her."

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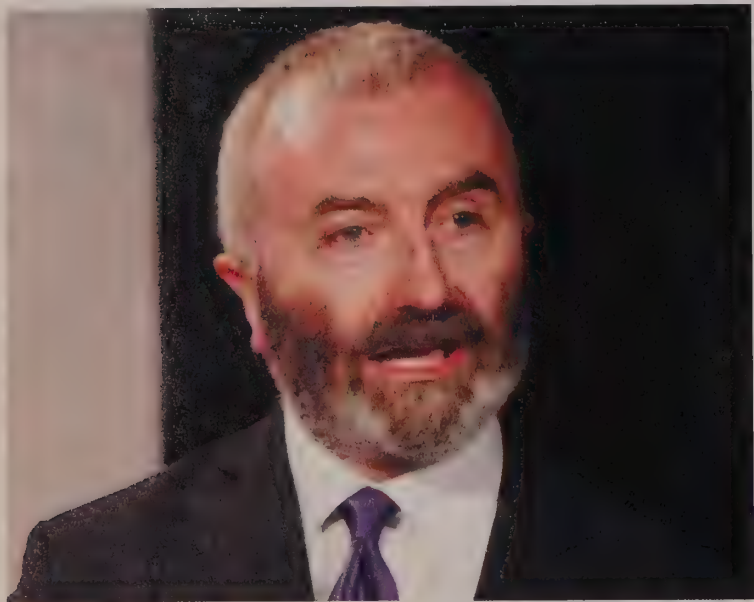


Beautiful

Time to get equal

Abandon IB reform

A government green paper seeking to modernise Incapacity Benefit will be published this month, but Andy Rickell says no to IB reform and demands complete overhaul of support for disabled people



Many theories abound about the motive for the government's commitment to Incapacity Benefit (IB) reform. I think it is driven by their belief that many claimants ended up on IB as a consequence of the previous government's attempt to move long-term unemployed people out of the politically sensitive unemployment statistics. So the perception is that these people are "incorrectly labelled" as out of work due to sickness or disability. Be that as it may.

The initial proposals for reform expose the government's continued failure to understand that disabled people need individually tailored provision that takes account of our variety of support needs and our plethora of lifestyle choices and circumstances.

So I have a simple yet radical proposal for incapacity benefit reform – scrap IB altogether.

All unemployed people seeking work, disabled or not, should be on the same unemployment benefit. Additional costs of disability should be dealt with in a completely different way – one that provides no disincentive to find work and will allow us to

scrap all the different ways of providing support to disabled people. The complexity of the present system fails to meet disabled people's needs and aspirations yet creates unnecessary and expensive bureaucratic barriers to that very support.

Let's consign to the dustbin of history the type of support that is traditionally based on the medical model, that is benefits, tax credits, community care assessments, equipment assessments, Access to Work, specialist transport and concessions, housing grants and everything else that tries to meet disabled people's needs in a piecemeal way. Let us do away with multiple medically oriented assessments by unco-ordinated, unresponsive and inefficient bureaucracies.

What we need is a single transparent and fair system of support that empowers disabled people with the resources to meet their personalised needs, to make a reality of disabled people's right to independent living, and which does not create artificial barriers between support at home, work and education.

We need one single, standard

assessment procedure, administered by a national agency, which looks at all aspects of need. One in which the disabled person self-assesses their own needs with support from independent living advisers provided through local Centres for Independent Living (CIL). Independent advisers have an advantage over the current system as they have no conflicting roles as gatekeepers for government money.

The new system would work like direct payments, but cover every area of life. It would also have some amazing economic benefits. With the money and hence the power in the hands of disabled people, we would experience a growth in the market for goods and services to support independent living, and force down the prices of specialist items like wheelchairs and communication aids.

Reform of the current system, by reducing the number of civil servants and social workers who currently administer it, would make money available to support CILs to facilitate the new approach and could create new employment opportunities and new roles for those affected, such as personal assistants instead of care workers, advisers instead of social workers.

I suspect many people whose jobs depend on disability will be only too keen to work in a new system that gives real freedom and choice to disabled people. I suspect they feel as trapped by our current system as we do.

Now all we have to do is work together to convince the politicians to pilot this approach.

** Andy Rickell is Scope's executive director for diversity and corporate planning.*

Scope AGM

Honorary treasurer Caroline Salsbury told members how Scope will get back on the right financial track



On Saturday 15 October Scope held its Annual General Meeting in Solihull. The day, which was a mix of speeches, Q&A sessions and group work, was well attended by more than 200 Scope members, staff and trustees.

Scope chair, Gerald McCarthy, opened the AGM with a speech that welcomed new appointments to the senior management team. He emphasised Scope's need to have a team of "big hitters", responsible for leading a new way of delivering full cost-recovery services. He stressed that for Scope to achieve its ambitious mission it must become more business-like and be able to compete within the commercial world. He highlighted Scope's latest projects – Access Equality and Diversity Works – as being good examples of this.

Honorary treasurer Caroline

Salsbury continued this theme in her review of Scope's financial situation. She emphasised the need for Scope to reach financial sustainability but gave firm assurances that the organisation 'is on the right course, we have the right strategy and we have the right people on board'.

Chief Executive Tony Manwaring responded to further specific questions about Scope's financial position and direction for the future. He emphasised the unique position and opportunity Scope has for being a "lever for change" in the fight towards equality for disabled people.

He also roused support for Scope's latest Time to Get Equal campaign, which focuses on access to transport. Scope staff and members will be joining forces on 1 December to highlight the problems disabled people face when using public transport.

scope

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For disabled people achieving equality.

For more information about Time To Get Equal tel: 020 7619 7368 or email: catherine.hudson@scope.org.uk

The Chip and PIN Programme has recently launched a campaign to encourage everyone with a chip and PIN card to use their PIN for all their purchases. This is because after Valentine's Day 2006 you must use your PIN to be sure you can pay with your chip and PIN card.

How will it affect me?

For the vast majority of disabled cardholders who are already happily using PIN there's no change. Recent research of disabled cardholders has found that the majority have welcomed chip and PIN and find it easy to use. The research carried out by NOP* found that 82 per cent of disabled cardholders like using chip and PIN and 70 per cent prefer this method to signing. For those cardholders the advice is to continue to use PIN wherever and whenever you can.

If you have a chip and PIN card but don't know the PIN you should not expect to be able to sign after this date. You may need to provide an alternative method of payment instead. If you don't know the PIN for any of your chip and PIN cards, or you are not sure if your card is a chip and PIN card contact your card company now - they will send you a reminder.

If you have a chip and PIN card and have input the wrong PIN on three consecutive occasions your card will have been temporarily locked - you can unlock it by contacting your card company.

If you haven't yet received a chip and PIN card don't worry. You will be able to continue signing in all stores until your card is upgraded even if it is after Valentine's day.

What if I am unable to use chip and PIN?

Using a PIN may be more difficult than signing for some disabled cardholders. If this applies to you, contact your card company straight away. They will be able to provide you with an alternative, most likely to be a chip and signature card. Disabled cardholders with chip and signature cards because an impairment prevents them from using PIN will always continue to sign for goods even after Valentine's day. If a retailer is unsure about accepting a chip and signature card ask them to insert the card in the terminal and follow the instructions provided - these will request signature rather than PIN.

If you are a disabled driver who uses a chip and PIN card you will continue to be able to use your chip and PIN card at petrol stations after 14 February. Over the coming months some petrol stations will begin installing mobile PIN pads that will be brought to your car for you to enter your PIN. After the 14 February petrol stations that have not installed the new PIN pads will have procedures in place to enable customers to use a signature just as they do today.

Why the change?

Since its introduction, UK shoppers have taken to chip and PIN with enthusiasm. It has already cut fraud on cards and has cut down the time spent queuing at the checkout. One hundred chip and PIN transactions a second are already verified by a PIN - which shows how easily most of us have made the change. And we cut out £36m of fraud in the first half of 2005 as a result of chip and PIN and we now want all UK shoppers to use the PIN on their chip and PIN cards so we can stop even more fraudsters using other people's cards.

* NOP interviewed 350 disabled cardholders in the period 2 to 14 August 2005.
This is the fifth wave of disability research

Visit www.chipandpin.co.uk for further information and advice



Chip and PIN



www.chipandpin.co.uk



What if I have trouble remembering my PIN?

The following tips have been developed by the Programme to help you choose and remember your PIN

- If you find your PIN hard to remember, you can change it at most cash machines - just select the 'PIN services' option and follow on the on-screen instructions.
- If you change your PIN, don't use numbers too easily associated with you like part of your telephone number, or year of birth as they are too easy to guess.
- Remember to find out the PIN on your credit card - as you are less likely to have used it in the past. If you don't know it, ask your card company to send you a reminder.
- Avoid popular or obvious number sequences like 1234 or 9999 - random combinations of numbers are best and harder for a criminal to guess.
- Some people find it helps to visualise the pattern the numbers make on the keypad as they enter them.
- Try breaking your PIN into two lots of two numbers, for example 5641 might be remembered as fifty-six and forty-one.
- Combining numbers which mean something to you is always a good way of remembering - your youngest child's age (10) with your best friend's house number (23) for example.

New tsar is born

The Labour government is to appoint a new tsar who will oversee the "health and wellbeing" of working age adults.

Work and pensions secretary David Blunkett (*right*) told conference delegates that a national director for occupational health would be responsible for helping people "with ill health" stay in and return to work as well as lead on preventing workplace sickness and accidents.

The first tsar to be appointed jointly by the two government departments, Mr Blunkett's and

the Department of Health, will implement a "health, work and wellbeing strategy" to be unveiled later this year.

Mr Blunkett said employers would be expected to do more for the wellbeing of their staff and potential employees.

"We are going to have to ensure that there is greater responsibility taken by employers in helping people to stay in work, to be supported when they're recovering from accidents at work and to be able to ensure that millions of men or



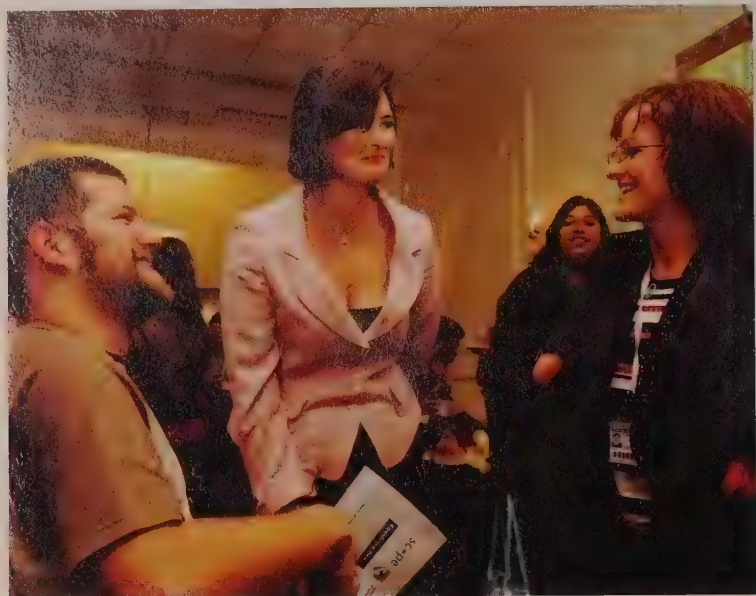
women who wish to return to work get the support to do so."

Trade unions would play a key part in helping roll out the strategy, he added.

Although the strategy will be aimed at getting people back to work, Mr Blunkett assured

conference-goers that people would not be forced into employment too soon or lose their benefits.

"During recovery from ill health, we need to encourage people to be able to restore their dignity through volunteering without their benefits being damaged. We need to offer greater certainty when people are prepared to take the risk of taking a job by making it easier to hold on to benefits and regain them if the job goes wrong," he said.



Brighton up the conference: Comedian Laurence Clark shares jokes with Cherie Blair, Scope's patron, and the charity's head of external affairs, Tara Flood, at an "Equali-tee-hee" comedy night, organised by Scope and the Commission for Racial Equality. The evening followed fringe meetings on how to tackle disability and racial discrimination in education.

Pass confusion

Disabled delegates at this year's Labour Party conference said they had trouble accessing venues due to confusion over how the passes operated.

Brighton's conference centre and the main hotel, the Hilton Metropole, were linked by a footbridge that many disabled people could not use. Without a "fence pass", which gave access to both venues at ground level, wheelchair users were forced to find difficult alternative routes between venues.

Fence passes were organised but late applicants did not receive them. This included Caroline Salisbury, honorary treasurer of Scope. She told DN: "The late accreditation

pack that came to disabled delegates did not mention how to get a gated pass.

"It has taken me over an hour to get here [Hilton Metropole] through the basement. I've had to go up a lift and down ramps – you can't physically do it in a manual wheelchair."

Conference administrator Barbara Lidster denied there had been problems. She said: "It was all explained how the fence pass worked – even those who applied for late accreditation.

"All security people at the fences were told about the pass and if anyone had problems I was on 24-hour call. But no-one called me."

New rights for disabled activists

Labour's disabled members group won new rights for disabled people wishing to participate in party activities at the conference.

Delegates backed a motion from the group, which called for establishing equal rights for disabled people in all activities and will lead to the appointment of a disability officer in all Constituency Labour Parties (CLP).

Proposing the motion, the group's general secretary Janet Seymour Kirk (*right*) explained the importance of appointing representatives for minority members. "Women officers ensure that women are able to attend and take part in a meeting.

"So a disability officer will hopefully ensure that any disabled member who attends is also able to be included in political as well as social meetings."



Ms Seymour Kirk added: "Have you or your CLP given thought to the access of the venue that you use? Does it have steps, handrails, an accessible toilet, good lighting or a loop system?"

"Ensuring your CLP has a disability officer will confirm your CLP's commitment to the promoting of equality, that you are seriously wanting to consider changing the options that will mean that you are tackling the full inclusion of your local community."

FRINGE FOCUS

The National Union of Teachers (NUT) called on the government to increase provision for disabled pupils, including more funding for the Schools Access Initiative "that is running out in 2006/7".

At a Scope meeting on education, NUT member John Bangs said: "There is absolutely no argument at all that all those with disability should have full access to mainstream education," but added, "there is a question mark over emotional behavioural difficulties and that is a genuine and ongoing discussion".

Schools minister Jacqui Smith said Labour was committed to inclusion, through a "personalised education system".

At a Disability Rights Commission meeting, there were calls for Incapacity Benefit (IB) to be scrapped.

Rachel Hurst (*right*), director of Disability Awareness in Action, said IB reform would only introduce "more



bureaucratic and administrative layers". The benefit allowed employers to discriminate as they could "get rid of people, knowing that there's going to be IB for them".

Instead, she said, a "one-stop assessment" for individuals should be used to calculate a centralised allowance for all needs, including "what sort of Disability Living Allowance that you would have, but also what sort of equipment that you need, including housing".

Lorna Reith, chief executive of the Disability Alliance, told a fringe meeting that the forthcoming green paper on IB must increase the level of benefits available to disabled people. Speaking at a meeting of the New Beginnings alliance of disability and employment advisors, she said higher levels would make it easier for people to find employment.

"They need sufficient money, to be in good health, to have social contacts, to be able to travel, to have decent clothes and a good appearance." She also demanded support and choice as IB is reformed. "There are already in the pathways areas a series of compulsory interviews... so what happened to choice?"

FRINGE FOCUS

Hate crime against disabled people can be addressed by "re-empowering people to start taking control over their local environments", according to the shadow attorney general.

Dominic Grieve told the Citizens Advice fringe event that most hate crime had its origins in fear.

Caroline Ellis, parliamentary affairs manager for the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), called for a major awareness campaign. She said: "There is zero publicity coming out of the government about disability hate crime and what can be done to tackle it."

A shadow health minister has called for a complete overhaul of application forms for disability benefits.

Tim Loughton, chair of the Conservative Disability Group, told its fringe meeting: "There are enormous great wedges of paperwork for no apparent reason."

He said forms should also be made internet compliant.

Another shadow health minister called for more provision of palliative care for conditions other than cancer.

Simon Burns also criticised the postcode lottery in provision of palliative care at a fringe meeting on end of life care and said his party would increase government funding of hospices.

Bert Massie, chairman of the DRC, warned that the lack of funding for palliative and hospice care was helping to increase pressure to legalise assisted suicide.

fringe chat

● The DRC's fringe event on welfare reform took an interesting turn when panellist Minette Marrin, a *Sunday Times* columnist, attacked the social model of disability and "counter-productive" efforts to campaign for equality for disabled people.

Seated next to chairman Bert Massie, she criticised "expensive quangos".

Afterwards, she declined to say if the DRC was one of these quangos. "It's a sensitive area", she muttered, edging away from our reporter.

● Former London Mayoral candidate Steve Norris made a bid for the Blue Badge vote by suggesting fighting abuse of disabled bays by wiring them to "about 50,000 volts" – with isolators to protect genuine badge holders, of course.



PARTY Conservative LOCATION Blackpool WORDS John Pring

Charities should help in work search

The voluntary sector should play a bigger part in finding disabled people work, according to the Conservatives' new disability spokesman.

David Heathcoat-Amory (right), a shadow department for work and pensions minister, told *DN*: "The energy on disability issues comes from the voluntary sector and not government. The government has put its toe in the water but its heart isn't in it."

He said he would "formalise and widen" the role of the voluntary and private sectors in getting people off incapacity benefit and into work, giving providers long-term contracts and incentives and "the security to invest in that side of their work".



David Heathcoat-Amory: the new Conservative disability spokesman

But he said the party was still not able to give *DN* a firm commitment to introduce winter fuel payments for severely disabled people.

In comments that closely

mirrored those of his predecessors in both 2004 and 2003, he said: "If we can find off-setting savings elsewhere in the benefits system, that would be an early candidate for consideration."

Cameron: 'Save special schools'

Tory leadership contender David Cameron has again pledged to "save special schools".

In his main conference address, the shadow secretary of state for education, who has a disabled son, said Labour's policy of putting "every child in the same class in the same school"

was "heartless" and "gutless".

A spokeswoman for Mr Cameron told *DN* afterwards that he was "not anti-inclusion – he's pro-choice".

She said inclusion had been "pushed to the absolute extremes", and said a Conservative government could open new special schools.

But she said cutting funding for inclusion in mainstream schools was "certainly not part of the agenda".

"The whole point is to make sure children with special needs are getting the education requirements that they need. If they are getting that in a mainstream school, then brilliant."

'Disgust' over venue

Conference organisers managed to place the Conservative Disability Group's (CDG) fringe event in one of the smallest, most inaccessible venues in the main Winter Gardens conference centre.

Michael Dunlop, a CDG vice-chair, said he was "disgusted" by the venue.

David Heathcoat-Amory MP, the party's disability spokesman, said the venue was "completely inappropriate".

He said it was unlikely the party would return to Blackpool and pledged to ensure access was "a major consideration" while choosing future venues.



Jim Hattersley (above), director of the CDG, also pointed to problems for visually impaired people using the lifts because of small buttons, and a steep ramp inside the Winter Gardens.

But Oliver Flitcroft, a delegate and wheelchair user from Barrow-in-Furness, said access was "excellent" and praised the assistance of security staff and police.

Respite promise for 6 million carers

A Conservative government would introduce a guaranteed level of respite for every carer, a fringe meeting on the future of social care heard.

Theresa May (right), shadow secretary of state for the family, said the country's six million carers had "moved up the political agenda".

She said the current system of respite care provision was "patchy" and the party should be developing a manifesto for carers.

She said: "My concern is that carers do not have enough control over the type of respite care they receive. Access to respite at the moment is so dependant on where you live."

She said carers should have "a right to respite" although this would be "very costly" and a Conservative government "might have to start with a right to respite that is quite low".



After the meeting, Imelda Redmond, chief executive of Carers UK, welcomed the pledge but was concerned it might divert resources from other areas of support for carers.

She said the idea was "a good place to start the debate" but particularly welcomed a possible manifesto for carers, to look at areas such as benefits, tax, pensions and housing.

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Zealous risk management threatens independence

The Liberal Democrats' new disability spokesperson has condemned "excessive, overly prescriptive" risk management by employers and society, which stops disabled people living independent lives.

Danny Alexander, MP for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey, told a Health and Safety Commission fringe meeting that risk assessments should be more about "individuals taking responsibility" and "human judgement".



He warned against "precautions that can be discriminatory" and stressed that the chal-

lenge was to make sure employers and individuals have all the information required to make responsible decisions.

Mr Alexander added: "We must move away from the idea that disabled people are risks within themselves and that they are always particularly vulnerable."

His comments follow the Disability Rights Commission's report, *Whose risk is it anyway?*, which examined how risk assessment and fear of litigation can limit disabled people's life choices.

Bill Callaghan, chair of the Health and Safety Commission, told the meeting: "We've found health and safety concerns are being used as a convenient excuse (by employers) not to make adjustments for disabled people."

He said regulation was not necessarily the best way of tackling problems and there was a need for a "culture of awareness".

Campaigners slam 'diabolical' access

Access at the main conference venue in Blackpool was "diabolical", according to a long-standing member of the Liberal Democrat Disability Association (LDDA).

Motorised scooter user Susan Carson (*right*), from Salford, was incensed that the only way she could enter the Winter Gardens auditorium was by a back entrance, which meant she had to travel around the block.

She said: "Currently we have no representation on the federal conference committee. We gave them guidelines and they haven't acted on them."

Other LDDA members also voiced concern about accessibility of the programmes and ramps that were too steep.

LDDA member Jane Bunce said: "I grumbled about Bournemouth but that is nothing compared to this."

Conference steward Robert Cheadle, who was appointed to address access issues, admitted there had been a "lack of thought". But he said the decision to have the conference in Blackpool was a last resort, as renovations at the intended Bournemouth venue had not been completed by the deadline.



Mr Cheadle said: "It was a force of circumstance. We took a centre that we would not normally use."

He blamed the building's listed status and said confer-

ence organisers had also relied on information given by the Winter Gardens. "The centre is saying it is DDA approved, but you can't access the whole building," he said.

FRINGE FOCUS

A fringe event organised by the NASUWT teachers' union failed to discuss the issue of inclusive education, despite the theme being A Curriculum for All.

The shadow education secretary, Ed Davey, emphasised the importance of "each individual child learning to their potential".

But only when prompted by DN did he address the issue of disabled students.

He said: "One size doesn't fit all. Inclusion works well for a lot of children, but it doesn't work for every child."

Reforms to Incapacity Benefit must make a clear distinction between people who can and cannot work, campaigners and delegates demanded at a Citizens' Advice fringe meeting.

David Laws, shadow secretary of state for work and pensions, said the government was "doing some things right", but warned targets and budget cuts could put "massive pressure" on the Department for Work and Pensions.

Disabled people are entitled to efficient, timely social care services, according to the chief executive of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE).

At SCIE's fringe meeting, Bill Killgallon voiced concerns about how the transition from child to adult care leaves people in danger of slipping through the cracks.

Sandra Gidley, Lib Dem spokesperson on older people, said social care services should go further in addressing individual needs than they do now.

fringe chat

● After the Lib Dems' new Scottish MP Jo Swinson called on the party to discuss legalising cannabis, DN was keen to talk to her. Unfortunately, after arranging a time and place to meet, her invitation was mysteriously withdrawn. What a shame it would be if the Lib Dem hierarchy is now too scared of the right-wing press to discuss legalising medicinal cannabis to help disabled people.

● It seems the new Lib Dem disability spokesman Danny Alexander could do with reading up on some of the issues. When DN asked him about the party's stance on inclusive education, he asked, "What do you mean by inclusive education?"

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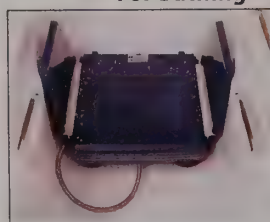
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Sectioning should be the last resort

Liberal Democrats voted for compulsory treatment of people with mental health problems only to be used as a last resort.

They also voted for increased access to mental health services at an early stage, during a debate on the party's mental health policy.

Paul Burstow MP, the Lib Dems' former Shadow Health Secretary, criticised the current climate of scaremongering by the government, with its controversial Mental Health Bill.

He said murders committed by people with mental ill health, which contribute to the reasoning behind compulsory treatment, were "very rare".

He said mental health services needed preventative care, more resources and better training.

He added: "Compulsion today is the first step, when it should be the last resort.

"The legislation this government is putting forward will further stigmatise people with mental ill health...put it in the bin!"

The motion was backed by Peter Rainford, a disabled man from Liverpool, who accused New Labour of "pandering to myth and emotion".

He noted that the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the mental health charity Mind are opposed to compulsory treatment.

Liberal Democrat councillor Jean Fooks, who introduced the motion, said: "The government is reacting to popular misconceptions, fuelled by the media."

Appealing for more funding, she claimed Britain has "fewer psychiatrists per head than Bosnia".

She also urged employers to recognise mental ill health in their policies.

PARTY Green **WORDS** Martyn Shrewsbury

Social model central for Greens

The Green Party aims to create a just and sustainable society. As a consequence, we have extensive policies on disability.

Past and present governments have used the medical model of disability, focusing on a person's impairment. This leads to a belief that disabled people can never participate fully in society. We believe in the social model and focus on society's response to impair-

ments. Barriers to inclusion exist because the cost of breaking them down is considered too high. We argue that basic human rights should not be denied on cost grounds.

We support DN's Baywatch campaign. Many disabled parking bay abusers do not appreciate the impact of their offences. Using fines and name-and-shame tactics, we support promoting awareness among

non-disabled drivers.

We advocate legalising cannabis. The outdated fear of drugs makes criminals of peaceful members of society, particularly those who use drugs medicinally. We also support DN's Hacked Off campaign.

The Green Party supports a "Citizen's Income". This is a non means-tested payment to all citizens that would cover basic needs, including fuel



allowance. It would also include an additional disability allowance.

The Green Party has no poli-

cy on extending sentences for specific crimes, such as the abuse of vulnerable adults, but we do believe in punishing where necessary and also, importantly, in improving the prevention of such crimes.

● For more information, tel: 020 7272 4474 or see www.greenparty.org.uk

● Martyn Shrewsbury is a Green Party disability spokesperson

PARTY Plaid Cymru **WORDS** Leanne Wood

Plaid Cymru backs DN campaigns

Plaid Cymru, the party of Wales, has fought for the recognition of rights for disabled people for decades. Our honorary president Dafydd Wigley was one of the first to campaign for legal protection against disability discrimination when he put forward a private members bill at Westminster.

Today, we remain committed to the vision shown by our former leader. We continue to campaign for policies that will put a stop to the discrimination faced by disabled people every day.

That is why we support DN's campaigns for winter fuel payments for severely disabled people under 60, the legalisation of cannabis for medicinal purposes and a maximum ten-year sentence for those who abuse vulnerable adults.

We are calling for a payment of disability allowances alongside pensions, an improvement in advocacy services and support and tailor-made grants for home adaptations.

We also believe that all disabled students, not just those in full-time further education,



should receive disabled students' benefits.

We would like to see "homes for life" being developed where possible and we want to bring back bus grants so that they can be adapted for disabled people.

Plaid Cymru has spoken out against the disproportionate poverty experienced by the estimated one in six disabled people in Wales and have called on the government to provide a better deal.

My Westminster colleague Hywel Williams and I will continue to press the government on all issues facing disabled people.

● For more information, tel: 029 2064 6000 or see www.plaidcymru.org

● Leanne Wood is Plaid Cymru's shadow social justice minister

PARTY Scottish National Party **WORDS** Shona Robison

SNP pledges benefits review

Reform of the current benefits system is a key priority for the Scottish National Party (SNP). The present system has many poverty traps, which cause unnecessary hardship for the most vulnerable in society.

For this reason, we are committed to an integrated and simplified tax and benefits system, through the means of a "Citizen's Income". This will allow people to combine work and welfare in a way that will not penalise anyone financially for entering employment.

We share concerns that Incapacity Benefit is not always going to those who need it most

and we believe it is vital to encourage those who are willing and able to work to do so and we do not penalise those who are unable to help support themselves through work.

It is a cornerstone of SNP policy that no one should be denied access to the medical services they need. We are committed to a phased abolition of prescription charges with, as a first step, abolition of charges for all those who have chronic conditions.

It is important that all people are able to play a full and fulfilling role in society and we will continue to ensure that legislation continues to promote



equality of opportunity, enhances people's dignity and increases the opportunities to participate in everyday life for disabled people.

● For more information, tel: 0131 525 8900 or see www.snp.org

● Shona Robison is the SNP's shadow health and community care minister



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Letters to the Editor

Send your letters to the acting editor Sarah Hobson, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW, minicom: 020 7619 7332, fax: 020 7619 7331, email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

Buses moving in right direction

Recent letters and articles about transport in London have been too negative, I think.

Overall things are improving for disabled people. OK, there is only one space on every bus, the ramps are steep, travel information can be complicated and we haven't yet got the display boards or audible announcements that American buses have used for years. Also, I have had bus drivers switching

lanes to avoid picking me up – but at the same time I have been offered great help and generosity from drivers.

The pace of change is too slow, but if you are in London you can normally get to your destination. As for the rest of Britain, I don't know. Certainly in my rural area you can wait hours for the next bus and even then, it's unlikely you'd be able to get on it.

On the day of the London bombings, I was near King's Cross and about to board a bus when the police took it over for casualties. Of course, the emergency services were busy, but, being caught up in the cordons, I found everyone to be helpful and eventually managed to get home to Yorkshire that evening.

Robert Adamson,
North Yorkshire

back chat

● You might expect Backchat to congratulate the deafblind charities that withdrew Ryanair from a "disability friendly award" shortlist after the airline kicked eight visually impaired people off an aeroplane because flights only accept a maximum of four

disabled people.

But considering *DN* has published 14 stories on previous Ryanair problems since 2002, Backchat asks why the airline was shortlisted for the Deafblind Friendly Corporate Awards in the first place?

● Yet another C-lister has failed to abide by disabled parking bay etiquette. This time, the lady in question is Jennifer Ellison (formerly of *Brookside*) who was snapped hogging a bay in *The Sun*, while putting shopping into her very big BMW.



Is Debenhams case a one-off?

Shop the rot

I was delighted to read in September that wheelchair user Greg Jackson (*right*) is prosecuting Debenhams under part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act with the support of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). Unfortunately, my own experiences of the commission are very different.

My daughter is a wheelchair user but she cannot browse books in Waterstones, Perth, because of four steps. The DRC has said it is reasonable to "bring books down" to her. In WHSmith nearby, there is no lift to access CDs and DVDs on the upper floors, but once again the DRC says the shop's online service is considered a reasonable alternative. These problems are similar to those for Mr Jackson in Debenhams. My initial expectations that the DRC would be a toothless dog have sadly proved to be correct. Gordon Rennie, by email

The DRC replies: Our action against Debenhams is precisely because major retailers should be doing everything in their power to make adjustments for disabled people who face barriers when using a service. WHSmith and Waterstones – as national retail chains – should be doing likewise. We will be speaking to Mr Rennie again about his daughter's experience and thank *DN* for bringing this to our attention.

DRC: toothless quango

Last Christmas I tried to visit a Bournemouth museum but failed as I could not climb the stairs. I wrote to them but could not get a satisfactory reply, so I contacted the DRC. This resulted in an exchange of letters. Most information was irrelevant to my case.

Eventually I was told the DRC could only recommend I take out a court order against the museum and it could advise me on preparing a case, but that they would not contact the museum directly.

I replied to say the DRC was just another toothless quango and was sorry to have wasted my time and theirs. J Trusler, Oxon

The DRC replies: We assisted Mr Trusler from January to May 2005 and encouraged him to write to the museum to explain how they are making their premises user friendly to disabled people. They replied



that they had made adjustments to the museum's entrance but also said that a planning application to install a lift had been refused by the local council. We advised Mr Trusler of further action he should take. This is advice we give to any caller who is willing to act on our advice and get results. We are sorry to hear that Mr Trusler decided not to follow this advice.

Can't find legal help

I have been trying to pursue a legal case similar to Greg Jackson's, but cannot find the legal representation I need. Mine is against the Arcadia Group, which owns Dorothy Perkins. In the Stafford store, the majority of clothes are on the mezzanine level and being told clothes can be brought down or to shop online basically means "go home". The DRC does not offer legal services now. The Law Society says "you need a litigation solicitor", but such firms do not offer legal aid. Those that do, recommended by the Community Legal Service, virtually hang up when you mention the DDA. I am going round in circles. Joanne Holland, Stafford

The DRC replies: We are strengthening our conciliation service so that we can work with more local businesses to make their services user friendly. Disabled people don't want to spend their time in court but in shops, buying goods and getting a service. We should have investigated the possibility of resolving this case through conciliation or even litigation with Joanna and we have contacted her to take this forward.

Of the 300 cases that we have taken to conciliation, over 80 per cent were successfully resolved. Our plans for helping more disabled people challenge discrimination include making substantial investments in legally qualified local agencies on their expertise of the Disability Discrimination Act, enabling them to support disabled people in their communities.



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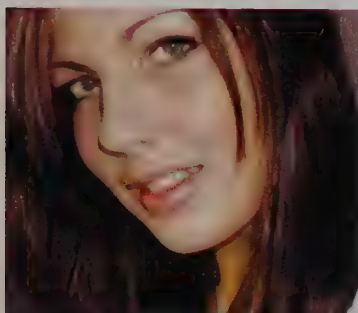
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Teen spirit



Emma Swainston –
The write stuff

I have achromatopsia, which makes it difficult to see in daylight and nystagmus, which makes it hard for me to focus on things. This means I work at a slow rate compared to everyone else, although I've done well in my exams so far.

At the moment, I'm at sixth form college where I'm studying English, fine art, textiles and PTE (philosophy, theology and ethics).

Although I've enjoyed mainstream education, I am considering going to a RNIB university because I know I'll get more support there than at mainstream uni.

I'd like to study journalism because I love writing and it seems glamorous. The idea of reporting from catwalks and concerts on the latest fashions and music is hard to resist. Disability laws and rights interest me a lot too, so there are a lot of paths I could take.

To become a journalist I'd need to do it my way – with speech on my computer and everything printed in a big font, preferably on yellow paper.

If anyone tries to discourage me – like they have in the past – I will tell them there is always going to be some sort of struggle, no matter what I do, so I might as well try.

Whatever I do, I hope it is more successful than my first experience of work. In year 11, I had a placement at a gym. Staff members did not understand my difficulties. I was stood at a desk all day waiting for the phone to ring and when it did I couldn't see the writing in the books to give people information. When I tried an aerobics class, the people were all moving so fast that when they went one way I went another; I looked a fool.

Like any teen, I have concerns over the future; about things like learning new environments, managing in a workplace, whether travel arrangements will work. Most importantly, I'll always want to know the quickest route to the nearest clothes shop.

Tyranny of the normals

Recent high profile cases have shown that tall people feel they are discriminated against. Academic Tom Shakespeare, who has restricted growth, knows how they feel



One reason I get a kick out of visiting historic sites is because they're often

places where being short is no problem. At Durham Castle recently, I saw a display of armour which proved that seventeenth century soldiers were considerably smaller than today's squaddies. If you go to Anne Hathaway's cottage in Stratford upon Avon, it's like a doll's house, even compared to the places they're building these days. A few centuries ago, being 4ft 5in would not have been as conspicuous as it is now, and buildings, clothes and furniture would have suited me better. Back then, being short was the norm, before the modern diet helped people shoot up to the current male average of nearly 6ft.

But spare a thought for the new breed of misfits: tall people. It's not just those under five foot who have difficulties negotiating the environment, and dealing with other people's prejudices. Ben Sargeant-Thomson, a would-be air traffic controller measuring 6ft 10in in his socks, was denied employment because he wouldn't have fitted



Ben Sargeant-Thomson: denied job because he did not 'fit in'

in. Literally. He would not have been comfortable at work, because his legs would not have fitted under the desk. A spokesperson for the National Air Traffic Control system said it would not be feasible to fit a purpose-built desk just for one person.

Sound familiar? Sounds like unfair discrimination to me, the same old unwillingness to adapt and be flexible that disabled workers have suffered for decades. Ultra-tall people may not have an impairment,

but they can face both physical and attitudinal barriers which are unrelated to their ability to perform the job. And they can also face problems elsewhere. Everyone who flies knows about DVTs – the blood clots caused by being constricted in a small airplane seat. Imagine how much worse it is for those whose legs are too long for the space between rows. Many tall people have no option but to fly in business class. Recently a tall Scots couple sought planning permission to raise the roof of

their home so they didn't have to stoop or bang their heads the whole time. It was refused, because it would have set a "dangerous precedent".

Ergonomics – the science of designing things to fit people – can be a kind of body fascism, because it usually caters for the middle range majority, not the people at the extremes. Because of mass production, it's common for people at the ends of the average-distribution Bell curve to find that their car isn't comfortable, or they can't negotiate public transport, or their office environment doesn't fit – all because it was designed to a standard, failing to understand that humans don't conform to one set of specifications.

To the great thrill of neighbouring children, I once lived in the same street as a professional basketball player, who came in around the 7ft mark. I used to watch him carefully fold himself into his car, driving away with his knees up round his elbows, and feel a twinge of sympathy.

Maybe it's time for the giants and the dwarfs to find a common cause, and campaign against the tyranny of the normals.

Candid Kate



I am a 22-year-old columnist who is doing a degree in performing arts. To do both of these, I need certain communication skills, which I am confident I have. I might have no ability for oral activities, but I can express myself as clearly as the next girl.

I speak through a powerful speech aid and, using a word prediction programme, computer and keyguard, I write my columns and essays. Due to the nature of cerebral palsy, mixed with the unfairness of life, my hands work slower than hands should and my brain works quicker. I type between 100 and 200 words an hour, then I need a pit stop. It can be frustrating.

However, for people like me there is a bigger problem than thinking straight while moving wobbily. This is the belief others hold that, because we don't communicate in the normal way, we can't communicate anything worth hearing.

It is a belief that permeates educational establishments. Five years ago I was taking my GCSEs in the most unhelpful school in the universe. While I was falling in love with Macbeth, my support teacher was falling out with a group of idiots who were trying to stop me doing English. They came up with various reasons – like I couldn't talk and didn't write fast enough. They even suggested I enter a lower exam, even though I was a B+ student.

I was not alone. I speak to many parents of young, bright communication aid users who still face the same problems over English SATs exams today. The discrimination must stop, and if it doesn't, I'll use my writing and communication skills to fight it.

• Kate Caryer is a student at the University of East London



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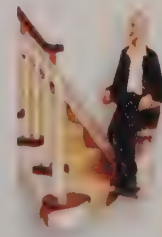
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Beyond Boundaries

BBC 2 has been broadcasting the adventures of 11 disabled people, who trekked across the Nicaraguan jungle for 28 days earlier this year. Three of them tell Priya Kotecha how the gruelling expedition challenged both themselves and their views of other disabilities and they reveal how their journeys end.

Charlie Fennell, Lorraine Pooley and Sophie Morgan may have embarked on the same 220-mile trip across the Central American country of Nicaragua last February and may have all been picked because they are disabled, but the similarities end there.

Their reasons for signing up to the *Beyond Boundaries* expedition are very different, as are their views on what each member brought to the team.

Born with a hearing impairment, Charlie Fennell, 31, an actor, had never done anything like this before, but thinking the experience was going to be like taking part in a glamorous reality TV show, he agreed to go ahead. Although producers told him the trip would be challenging, he says he assumed it would be fairly relaxing like the ITV1 series *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*.

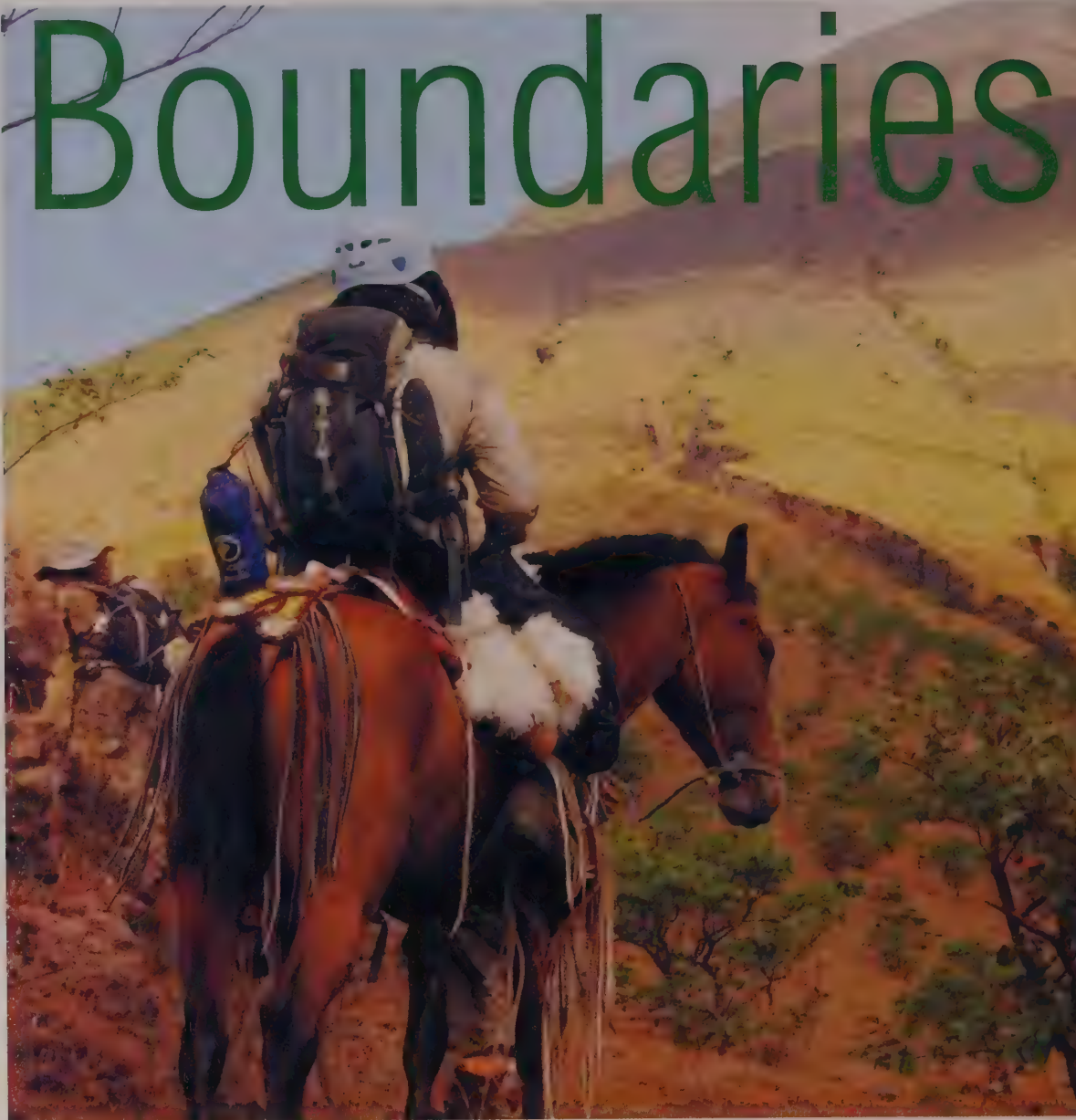
Housewife, mother of three and volunteer Lorraine Pooley, who has been an amputee for 14 years, says she has only twice walked to the top of her large garden in six years, but saw the advert for the programme and could not resist the "once in a lifetime opportunity".

She adds: "I thought if someone is there and saying you can do it, I'm going to give it a go."

At 19, Sophie Morgan was the youngest participant, one of two wheelchair users. The other was Paralympic star and TV presenter Ade Adepitan.

Sophie, a fine art student, was also the most recently disabled, following a car accident two years ago. Her name was put forward by the charity Aspire, which helps people with spinal cord injuries gain opportunities and independence.

She says: "I wanted to make sure that people who saw it



were inspired by both me doing it and just the whole show.

I wanted to make sure I did it well enough, so that kids who had accidents like mine would be motivated to do stuff."

But it was not until the team was dropped off at Mosquito Coast that they realised the enormity of their task and how challenging it would be to travel through muddy fields, swamps, patches of jungle and mountainous ground.

Charlie says he got cold feet within minutes of arriving. "I came off the boat and realised, hey I'm not in a hotel room, there's no beds.

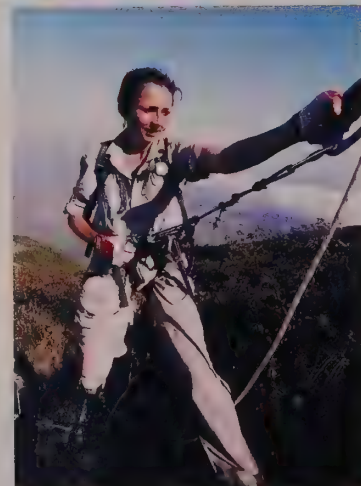
"We had hardly eaten, it was hot and sweaty, I had a terrible headache and you're fighting the mosquitoes off your face; things start to look a little different.

"Reality, when you are standing there and looking around, and can hear all these animals, has an effect on you."

Sophie says her first glimpse of the Nicaraguan jungle bought home how the muddy and uneven terrain would pose a serious challenge to her independence and limit her contribution to the team.

"I didn't like that I needed help and I didn't want to be helped. It was incredibly frustrating."

And just as the team became accustomed to the new surroundings, the person due to support Sophie headed home. Warren Wolstencroft, who had ideal experience for the journey as he used to be in the Army, discovered a lump below his



Clockwise from top left: Lorraine, Charlie and Sophie with Ade, smile at the more enjoyable parts of their trip

right elbow. With a rare and aggressive form of cancer he had already had part of his arm amputated eight years ago. Responsibility for pushing Sophie's wheelchair then fell to Charlie.

At first, Charlie says: "Me being one of the strongest people there I had to do quite a

lot, a little bit more than the rest of them, because there were only a few people who could do the pulling. That was the hardest bit, but we were there as a team so I had to do what I had to do, because I didn't want to let any of them down."

It was not long, however, before his fantasy versions of a

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jungle walkabout and cosy chats around the fire were shattered completely. He and Sophie were soon at loggerheads, after she accused him of not trying hard enough to push and support her, while he thought she was too demanding. She says: "He's an amazing person, but out in the jungle I found it quite frustrating because he was very able-bodied in comparison to a lot

of people out there as in there's nothing wrong with his body and I found him frustrating because he didn't work." "I felt very jealous of him, I wish I could have been in the same situation as him, instead of my situation. He made me feel quite guilty because he had to work hard to help me." Sophie adds: "I don't want anyone to help me but the thing about the whole trip was that in



Charlie not helping me it was letting everybody else down, not just me. It was de-motivating for the whole team."

But Charlie says that often he did not hear requests from other members to push Sophie's wheelchair and he felt excluded because of his impairment. "Everybody was well equipped for their own needs and their own disability, but a lot of things that were going on in the group I didn't hear. So they can say what they want to say about me that I didn't do this and I didn't do that, but a lot of things they say that they said to me I didn't even hear."

But he admits he was weakened as he refused to eat the food provided. His tastes were too refined, he claims.

Charlie also says: "I didn't push her not because I couldn't do it, I didn't want to do it. Sophie had a problem with me because I wouldn't be her PA out there. Emotionally, I lifted the team's morale. I did my fair share, I wasn't going to do more than that."

He adds: "She was fine until her car crash two years ago. All of a sudden life isn't the same for her altogether. So I'm saying for somebody to go around criticising and saying stuff about people's deafness and all that, she doesn't know what I've had to do my whole life. I'm 31 years old and I've been born deaf, I've had a difficult life. I fight my deafness and, because I am gay, my sexuality, every single day."

Playing the expedition mother hen and peacemaker was Lorraine, who did bond with Charlie unlike others in the group. She kept Charlie informed of group discussions, while helping Sophie to come to terms with her impairment and her new circumstances.

She says: "I was sharing a tent with them, so when they were both shouting at each other, there was some truth in what both of them were saying, and what others didn't realise is Charlie was dealing with her requests all through the night basically and then happy to do it all through the day and he didn't get a break. She adds: "Towards the end

when he was literally giving up his mind and his body, everyone then started to give him a little bit of pressure."

"I didn't push her not because I couldn't do it, I didn't want to do it. Sophie had a problem with me because I wouldn't be her PA"

Despite the tensions, both continued their journey, until in the third week Sophie got dysentery, septicaemia and an ear infection and returned home. "I was very disappointed not to finish it, I worked hard to get there and then I got ill and I had no choice really."

An exhausted Charlie left a few days later.

He says the experience "could not have been any tougher".

Charlie adds: "I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here should do what we did and we should do what they do, just stick round the camp fire. If they do a week of what we had

to do – including people with sticks, crutches and wheelchairs – we would see how long they'd last and really disabled people should be round the camp fire having a singsong."

But he says he has no regrets and his experience certainly made him more self-aware.

"I've learnt I am a lot stronger than I thought, both mentally and physically, but more mentally. I also think I should not get too wound up, to talk about things and have a discussion and not an argument."

He also has fond memories of the country he visited. "When we use to meet the locals and when we went sight-seeing, that was the favourite bit for me. I loved Nicaragua, it's a very poor country, but I loved every bit of it. It's beautiful, there's lovely people and the locals were very nice to me, I've not met one nasty local, they were very supportive and helped when they could."

Lorraine was one of seven team members to finish.

She says: "It was absolutely amazing to finish. I'm one of these people I set goals and do tend to try to make them. The only way I wouldn't have done it is if they took me out on a stretcher if my body actually let me down, but mentally I was always going to do it, there was no question about it."

* *The final episode of Beyond Boundaries is aired at 9pm, 1 November, BBC 2.*

** *Applicants are being sought for the 2006 series in Africa. Tel: 0117 985 8750 or email africa@diversebristol.tv*

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Drive to end abuse

It's not just members of the public who abuse disabled parking bays; staff from police forces and utility companies are at it too. John Pring unveils a new survey on how organisations deal with offenders in their own ranks



A police officer who parked in a disabled bay before popping into Marks and Spencer to do some shopping; the driver of a gas company van who stopped in a Blue Badge space in Wales, and a security firm that allowed its drivers to park in disabled bays in Nottingham – over the last three years, *DN* has reported on a string of cases in which vehicles belonging to some of the country's biggest employers have been caught using accessible parking spaces.

Now, in the first survey of its kind, we asked 19 organisations – three police forces, three local authorities, 12 utility companies and a security firm – how seriously they take the issue.

The results were not surprising. Few of the organisations had a specific policy on employees who misuse accessible bays, although most had a general policy that staff were expected to drive courteously and within the law. Most would at least treat the misuse of a disabled bay as a disciplinary offence. Several offer disability awareness training to drivers.

But the survey found that most organisations make no effort to inform staff about Blue Badge spaces and why they are so important to disabled people. The honourable exceptions were councils in Aberdeen and Kensington and Chelsea and police forces in Hertfordshire and Greater Manchester.

Councils and police forces come out of the survey better than utility companies, and there is evidence that some offenders caught misusing Blue Badge spaces in the past are trying to improve.

Three years ago, a Hertfordshire policeman accidentally ran over a disabled woman's toe after she asked why he had parked in a disabled bay. The following year, another policeman from the same force parked in a Blue Badge space to visit Marks and Spencer.

The first incident led to the force issuing advice about disabled bays to all its officers, and to the Association of Chief Police Officers telling chief officers to remind staff only to use Blue Badge spaces in emergencies. A police spokeswoman says the two incidents and the stories in *DN*

Organisation number of vehicles operated	Do you have a staff policy on misuse of disabled parking bays?	What would you do if an employee misused a disabled parking bay (except in an emergency)?	Do you offer drivers disability awareness training?	Does this include information on disabled parking bays?
Greater Manchester Police declined to say	✓	All complaints from members of the public are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly	✓	✓
South Wales Police 650	No specific policy, but staff expected to obey traffic laws	Complaints treated very seriously, with investigation and appropriate action	Diversity training will soon include disability awareness training	✗
Hertfordshire Police Own 580 and lease 54	✓	It would be classed as misconduct and, if it was a police officer, a breach of the discipline code	✓	No, but it is included in driving school advice to users of police vehicles
British Telecom 45,000	No, but expect drivers to act courteously and in a law-abiding way	Line manager would advise such behaviour was inappropriate and they would be responsible for penalties	All BT staff undergo disability awareness training	✗
Telewest Broadband 2,200	✓	Employee would be disciplined "in an appropriate manner"	✗	N/A
Severn Trent Water 1,500 cars and 1,300 commercial vehicles	No, but expect drivers to act courteously and in a law-abiding way	Would be dealt with by line manager	✗	N/A
South West Water 900 vehicles	No, but would be "extremely annoyed"	Would advise them not to do it again	No, but offers strict guidance on attitudes to fellow road users	N/A
Thames Water Utilities 2,500	Not specifically	Possible disciplinary action, depending on circumstances	✗	N/A
E.ON UK 1,300 cars and 2,100 commercial vehicles	No, but encourage all staff to be socially responsible	Would investigate and deal with case on its own merits	No, but may include advice when reviewing policy	N/A
npower Metering division - 1,200, many staff use own vehicles	No, but will consider during current policy review	Would depend on nature of complaint	No, but considering including in driving training	N/A
British Gas 9,500 vans and 2,400 cars	Nothing specific except to drive within highway code and law	Line manager would take appropriate action	No, but senior managers receive training	✗
Scottish Power "Commercially sensitive"	✗	They would probably get a warning	✗	N/A
National Grid 3,500	No, but encourage staff to work and act responsibly	Will investigate any reports in non-emergency situations and take appropriate action	✓	No, but have passed on to reviewing panel for possible future inclusion
London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea 70 vehicles	✓	Council would investigate and take disciplinary action if necessary	Yes, for drivers of accessible transport	Drivers can display Blue Badge only when transporting disabled people
Cornwall County Council 1,130 in fleet plus thousands of personal vehicles	All employees driving on council business must obey rules of road	Repeated offences would lead to disciplinary action	✓	Staff advised to park legally in all circumstances
Aberdeen City Council 17 minibuses	✓	Would "investigate and educate the offender"	Yes, staff should be trained within first year of service	✓
Scottish and Southern Energy 6,000	Have had no reports of misuse but would be taken seriously	Staff member would be spoken to by manager. Repeated offences would be disciplinary offence	✗	N/A

Securitas and EDF Energy declined to take part in the survey

helped lift the issue up the force's agenda. Greater Manchester Police, which faced embarrassment in 2002 when two of its officers were caught misusing a disabled bay while shopping, is another of the few organisations to include Blue Badge information in disability awareness training.

Other past offenders, though, have been slow to improve. South Wales Police is only including disability awareness in its diversity training now, while the security firm Securitas, which two years ago admitted allowing its drivers to park in disabled bays, refused to answer our questions. Douglas Campbell, executive

director of the Disabled Drivers' Association, one of the members of the Baywatch campaign, says the damage done to an organisation's reputation when one of its vehicles parks in a disabled bay is "quite substantial". "By obstructing a disabled person's mobility they are saying, 'XYZ plc doesn't give a

toss for disabled people." He says that particularly with the police, it sets an awful example. "Other people see it and say, 'If the police can do it, why can't I?'" It is vital, he adds, that organisations like utility companies and police forces make their drivers aware of how important disabled bays are.

YEAR
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Recipe for success

Nicola Swann has pledged 180 minutes a week to the Give a Billion Minutes campaign.

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Fuelling speculation

Rising petrol costs and the government's refusal to cut duty for disabled people means there has never been a better time to look at alternative fuels for your car. Helen Smith reviews the options

If you run a car you can't fail to have noticed that the cost of fuel has shot up recently. In some petrol stations a litre of petrol has broken the £1 mark. For many disabled people who rely on their car, the cost is becoming harder and harder to bear. Unlike our non-disabled counterparts, jumping on a bike or the bus is simply not an option, so we are forced to continue paying ever higher prices for fuel.

In Ireland, disabled motorists receive a rebate of tax duty on up to 600 gallons of fuel each year. Many argue that similar rules should apply in the UK.

The Disabled Drivers' Association thinks disabled motorists should receive some form of relief from the massive amount of tax they pay whenever they purchase petrol and diesel. "We believe that a rebate system for duty should be established," a spokesperson says. "The cost of fuel is a significant factor in limiting the mobility of disabled people who cannot use public transport."

These arguments will continue until the law is change, and there's no sign of that at the



moment. Until then, what other options are there to lower the cost of our fuel bills?

Bio-diesel

One option, which reduces fuel costs by a few pence a litre, is bio-diesel. This can be used instead of normal diesel in practically any diesel engine. Bio-diesel is made by refining rapeseed, sunflower or soya oil, or by recycling cooking oil that

has been used to fry things like fish and chips. Although it does have higher production costs than normal diesel, in July 2002 the government reduced excise duty on all environmentally friendly fuels by 20 pence, which means it is currently cheaper to buy than petrol.

In other European countries like France and Germany there is no excise duty on bio-diesel, so it's substantially cheaper. Many argue the same should apply in the UK.

As well as being cheaper, bio-diesel is also better for the environment; it's bio-degradable – it breaks down within 28 days – you can wash your hands in it, and you can even drink it. The only problem is it's not yet widely available. Where I live in Norfolk there are only a handful of places that sell it and that's largely because a local company, Global Commodities (GC), produces a product that they supply to nearby garages. You can find out which garages supply it by looking on the GC website.

GC chairman Dennis Thouless believes that some day East Anglia, with its vast areas of fertile farmland producing oil seed rape, will become home to the oil fields of the future.

Filling your car with bio-diesel may not offer huge savings to motorists yet, but if the government decides to follow other European countries and drop excise duty on it, savings could be huge.

• Tel: 01362 821 582, www.globeco.co.uk

Petroleum Gas

If you drive a petrol car, you can save money on fuel costs by converting your vehicle so it can run on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).

In the UK, propane – also known as autogas – is the most common type of LPG used. LPG is more widely available than bio-diesel but since petrol stations selling it are thin on the ground, cars converted to run on it can usually use normal unleaded petrol too.

LPG can cost as little as half as much as a litre of unleaded, although prices do vary across the country. Calculations by Vauxhall suggest that in the course of 75,000 miles, an LPG-converted car will save you around £3,200 in fuel.

It costs as little as £1,000 to convert an older car to run on LPG. On newer cars, a manufacturer-approved conversion can add between £2,000 and £2,500 to the list price, but if you do a high mileage it is definitely worth thinking about.

• More information on LPG conversions is on the Energy Saving Trusts website, www.est.org.uk, tel: 020 7222 0101

Hybrid vehicles

Hybrid vehicles are relatively new to the car market. These run off a rechargeable battery and petrol, rather than just petrol alone. Hybrid cars help to reduce fuel consumption because their engines draw on the battery, not fuel, when accelerating.

Hybrid petrol motors also shut off when the car is stopped and run off their electric motor and battery instead.

The regular fuel consumption of a hybrid vehicle is between 56 and 60 miles to the gallon, which is substantially less than a petrol-run car.

At the moment there aren't a great deal of hybrid vehicles to choose from, but I have been able to have a ride in a Lexus RX400 thanks to my friend John in Edinburgh who took delivery of one earlier this year. Test-driving the car, the most notable difference is how quiet it is and John says the handling felt smooth and light – like "driving a car arcade game".

Hybrids certainly save on fuel, but, as John puts it, "I did not buy this car to save petrol. I bought it for the extra power and because I fancied the latest and greatest. I really don't think many people who spend more than £40,000 on a car are going to moan about how many miles per gallon it's going to do."

The cost of hybrid vehicles means they are currently out of reach of most disabled drivers, but the trend for prices on new technology is always down, so it shouldn't be too long before they are within range of more people.

When they are, they could well become the cars of the future – helping us to save money and fuel, and the environment too.



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Adam Thomas, a wheelchair user since 1981, has 20 years professional experience of access issues. He designed both kitchens at the Disabled Living Foundation.

Design Matters is a family run business with over 25 years design experience. Its accessible showroom has easy parking and is located just off the M40 at junction 3/4.

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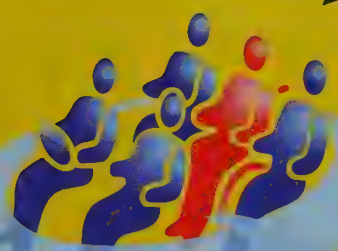
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Volkswagen Sharan
1498mm (59")
interior headroom



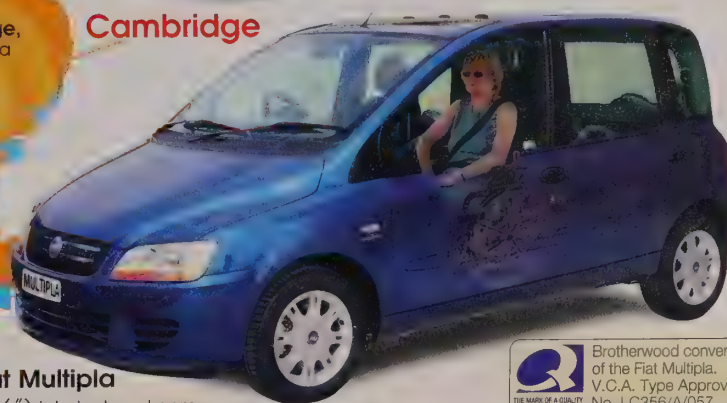
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the Volkswagen Sharan.
V.C.A. Type Approval
No. LC326/A/027 Ext. No.2



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V.C.A. Type Approval
No. LC/375/A/078



Fiat Multipla
1420mm (56") interior headroom



Brotherwood conversion of
the Fiat Multipla.
V.C.A. Type Approval
No. LC356/A/057

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Motability - maybe an opportunity for you to "get into" a Brotherwood conversion



Top of the kit parade

Mary Queally, Kerri Clarke and Priya Kotecha report on the latest equipment from a relatively quiet Independent Living Show in London's Alexandra Palace

What? The Shewee is a simple and neat continence device for women. It features an angled funnel shape at the top to fit securely against a woman's body. This means you can use it from a chair or bed to direct urine into a collecting device – or to wee standing up. Obvious benefits are for travellers and festival goers who can avoid hovering over unsavoury toilets.

How much? £5

Where? tel: 0797 0535 894, www.shewee.com



What? What will the disability equipment of tomorrow look like? London Metropolitan University had a display of designs from their MA course Design Research for Disability. The course aims to give students the knowledge and skills to design effective products for disabled people. One of the students, Yasuhiro Inoue, a furniture designer, was on the stand when I was there. He was displaying his prototype of a revolving storage system accessible to him from his wheelchair.

Where? tel: 0207 320 1849

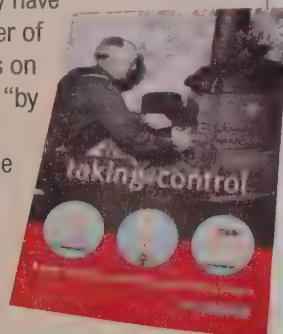


What? Ricability have launched another of their free guides on products tested "by people with disabilities or the disabilities that arise with age".

This one, *Taking Control*, is a guide to buying or upgrading central heating controls, including thermostats, valves and programmers. It gives comprehensive product comparisons as well as advice on things like getting help towards heating costs. Expect further free guides on driving later this year and early in 2006.

How much? free

Where? tel: 0207 427 2460, textphone 020 7427 2469, www.ricability.org.uk



What? Mountway have continued to upgrade their popular Neptune bath lift seat. It is now available with extra length side flaps, making it wide enough to allow it to be used in a corner bath. Widened rubber suckers on the feet are designed to provide a secure base. Maximum seat height is 435mm and it has a capacity of 160kg.

How much? Neptune bath lift, £524, extended side flaps sell as a pair for £49.29.

Where? tel: 01495 718 000,

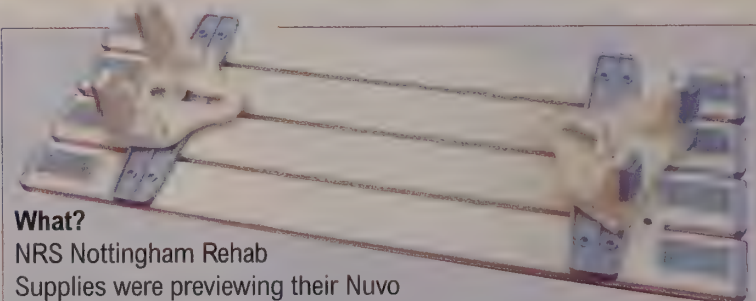
www.mountway.com



What? SnapDragon from Dragonmobility is an elevating powerchair, which can be custom made to fit the child's exact specifications. The seat can be adjusted to floor level for playing activities and can be elevated again with ease for eating or using the computer. A choice of seating systems is available and a tilt function enables the child to rest when needed.

How much? Up to £10,000

Where? tel: 01223 464 460, www.dragonmobility.com



What?

NRS Nottingham Rehab Supplies were previewing their Nuvo shower board, bath board and seat range in blue and white moulded plastic. The bath board comes with securely locking swivel brackets, which means it can be used on curved baths. The transfer edge of the bath board is flared to provide more sitting space along the rim of the bath. The board comes in two lengths: 670mm and 710mm. Prices were not available. NRS were also displaying a prototype of their new two-in-one bed rail. It fits securely between bed base and mattress to provide a grip handle on the side of the bed. The handle has been set at an angle to make it more effective to pull up against. It is suitable for use with either slatted or divan bases.

How much? Bed Rail, £38

Where? tel: 0845 120 4522, www.nrs-uk.co.uk

What? The VW Caddy Life from the Automotive Group is an attractive, modern-looking vehicle especially adapted to be fully wheelchair accessible. The quality VW engine and the space inside – it accommodates a wheelchair with occupant and two other passengers – makes the Caddy stand out. Show visitor Sam was pleased the Caddy "did not look like the usual adapted vehicle".

Where? tel: 0191 226 0099, www.automotivegroup.co.uk

What? Mangar International unveiled the Mangar Sub, a seating system for bathing children and general handling. This model is an improvement on the Surfer Bather and goes right down to the bottom of the bath, allowing the child to have more fun in the water, with less spillage. It can be used with a hoist to avoid the strain of carrying and can be ordered to include side rails and leg straps to keep the child secured properly.

How much? £265

Where? tel: 01544 267 674, www.mangar.co.uk



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What? School children will benefit from a new Nottingham Rehab Supplies product, the inflatable Movin'sit Cushion Junior, which helps growing children develop a healthy posture. Its pocketed texture provides the right support for children who tend to slump because of low muscle tone or poor awareness. The cushion is easily inflatable by mouth or pump, and sits easily on standard school chairs.

How much? £13.65

Where? tel: 0845 121 8111,
www.nrs-uk.co.uk

What? Another simple and innovative product from Nottingham Rehab Supplies is the School Chair Footrest. Developed in conjunction with medical departments in Bath and Newcastle, the footrest is designed to fix to a standard classroom chair to offer leg support as children learn. It is height adjustable and folds easily under the chair for storage.

How much? £69.95

Where? tel: 0845 121 8111, www.nrs-uk.co.uk



What? New from DCS Joncare is the Rigistand, which has been adapted from the older Varyflex standing frame, and offers a little less flexibility, to help keep the child more secure. Like the Varyflex, it comes complete with knee supports and the option of a removable tray for eating and playing.

How much? from £269

Where?

tel: 01235 523 353,
www.dcsjoncare.com

What? Pride Mobility Products Ltd were displaying a range of scooters and powered chairs. Particularly interesting was the Go Go Elite Traveller (three or four wheels). Its compact size enables negotiation of narrow spaces and it has three interchangeable colour panels. Charlotte from South Kensington liked the idea of a scooter she can change to match her clothes.


How much?
£1,300-£1,450

Where?
tel: 01869 233 100,
www.pridemobility.com



What? EV Technology were showing a range of mobility products. The mobicar was popular. A visitor who currently uses a four-wheeled scooter on the road said he feels quite vulnerable at times. "I think I'd feel safer in the mobicar – not so out in the open." EV Technology are adding windscreen wipers and wing mirrors to the mobicar and are making it possible for you to decide if you want doors. The updated version should be available at the start of next year.

Where? tel: 01455 550 011,
www.ev-technology.co.uk



What? It has been featured in the pages of *DN* before, but it's well worth mentioning again. The multifunctional Magiplug Bath Plug, from Ways and Means, is essential for every home and an absolute must if you have little angels at home. It has a unique pressure release mechanism, which prevents the bath from overflowing by releasing excess water through the plug-hole. More importantly though, it has a green heat sensor pad which changes colour at 36 degrees C to warn when the water may be too hot, preventing any scalding accidents.

How much? £7.99

Where? tel: 0845 606 0911

Mary Queally is a senior occupational therapist and Kerri Clarke is an occupational therapist and advisor at the Disabled Living Foundation



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Renault Trafic 1.9 D (New Shape)	PO54 VEA	Blue	5 Seats, Ramp	3,318	12,995
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Citroen Berlingo 1.9 D 5DR	YD02 WSZ	Red	3 Seats, Ramp	25,000	9,495
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E & OE

The talk of the town

Kate Caryer reports from the annual Communication Matters conference on the latest developments in accents and technology for AAC users

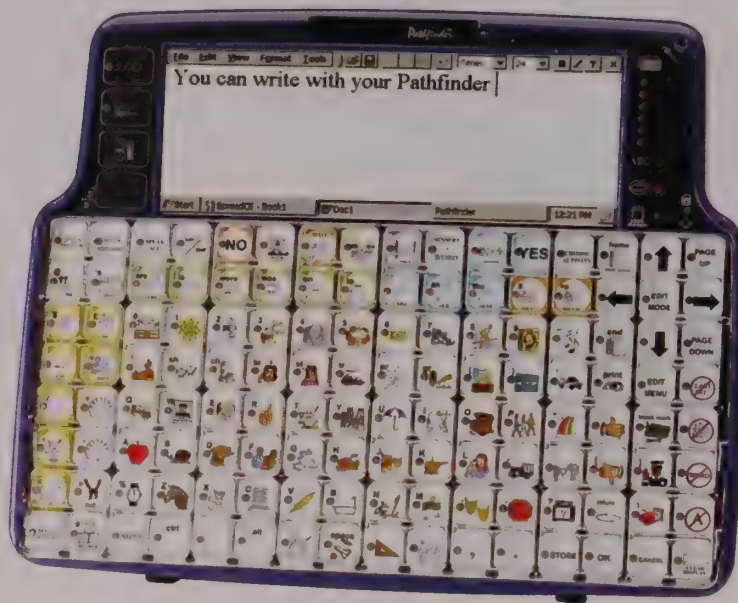
If you use a communication aid, it's tricky to find out about the latest products. You can't just pop down to Asda to pick up a Dynavox or wait for a door-to-door salesman to offer you the latest Pathfinder. Thank God then for the Communication Matters conference, the national symposium of all things talker-related, held this year at Leicester University.

All kinds of communication aids were on show. One of the most exciting developments was the range of new English accent voices that all the bigger companies were offering. For too long most Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) users have had to use a selection of nine or so "Dec Talk" American voices, originally created for a stateside telecoms company.

There are various speech

programmes for different machines. A good starting point for exploring what's available is Toby Churchill's website at www.toby-churchill.com. Even better is the Acapela Group website at <http://demo.acapela-group.com>, which allows you to hear demos of different voices. You can even write your own sentences in German, French and Indian to hear how the results will sound.

Most of the bigger communication aid names like PRI, Tellus and Dynavox, now offer some kind of programme for more British voices, but unfortunately you have to buy a whole new machine to access them – they are not programmable into older models. It is also a big step changing your accent – particularly with family and acquaintances who'll have to adjust to you changing from a



New Yorker to a Radio 4 announcer (and no, there's still no cockney accent).

A representative of one of the larger talker companies told me their machines could be programmed to sound Scottish. Great, I thought, but then they explained that the company's policy was to keep the Scottish voice to themselves until an AAC maker came forward to pay to use the technology. You can see the financial logic here, of course, but I'd hope more pragmatic concerns would also

play a part – you'd hope that young people like me, who depend on their innovations for our lifestyles, could benefit from shared technological developments. Maybe I'm being naive.

An exciting new concept that will help more severely disabled people use communication aids is a gadget from QED that uses eye movements to enable the user to operate switches.

Elsewhere at the show, there were few new developments,

but lots of improvements and updates to existing models.

I was pleased to see quite a few communication aid users there who use the same set up as me – a Pathfinder with LLL Minspeak Program (*left*), while the next, younger, generation seems to be using Dynavox systems. The Pathfinder users were so eloquent that I am interested to know why the Dynavox is given to kids. Could it be that it's easier to learn and needs less speech therapy input?

Minspeak takes between six months and a year to learn well, which I think frightens adults who forget the learning capacity of young minds.

On this slightly controversial note, I'll end by reminding readers that funding for all this wonderful gear is in jeopardy due to the closure of the Communication Aids Project next year (*DN*, May 2005).

• *Pathfinder*, tel: 01733 370 470 www.prentkeromich.co.uk

• *Dynavox*, tel: 01384 446 789 Dynavoxwww.dynavox.co.uk

• *QED*, tel: 0870 787 8850, www.qedltd.com

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1999 S VW Caravelle VR6, Auto, Hi Top, 21,000 miles	Due in
1998 R Brotherwood Alhambra, Auto, High roof, 30,000 miles	£13,495
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1998 R Ford Courier Chairman, Auto, 11,000 miles	£5,995
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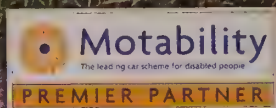
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TV

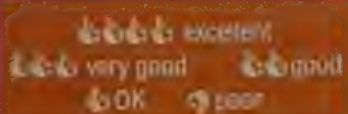


Why would anyone in their right mind choose to trek through the Nicaraguan jungle? Never mind someone with a disability. But of course it takes all sorts, as we're learning in BBC2's four-part series *Beyond Boundaries*, which charts the progress of a motley bunch of variously disabled volunteers on a month-long expedition without any of the comforts of home. Criticised for deploying the medical model of disability, the show (rather helpfully in my view) took time to explain the nature of each participant's impairment and whether it was congenital or acquired, thus setting the individual challenge more in context. This reality-TV-with-a-difference made me even more appreciative of my nice warm flat, comfy bed and sofa, not to mention bath, washing machine, car, fridge freezer, decent food, etc. Speaking as someone who was defeated by a slimy pavement outside Buxton Opera House last week, I felt a right wimp. But why is the BBC's *Ouch!* website featuring an expedition log from leader Ken Hames who, as far as I know, is not disabled?

More4's "biting satirical drama" *A Very Social Secretary* starred Bernard Hill in a brilliant performance as blind former home secretary David Blunkett navigating through his much-publicised extra-curricular shenanigans with Kimberley Quinn. I had to keep reminding myself that this was a drama rather than a documentary, so convincing was the whole package, complete with full-on shenanigans at No.10 with the Blairs and Alistair Campbell. I did have some doubts though over the portrayal of Blunkett as a chump whose naivete was exploited by all around him – including Mrs Quinn. After all, the guy hasn't got where he has by being a total pushover, has he?

If you have Sky, look out for the documentary *Abnormally Funny People* in December, which features – among others – abnormally funny Simon Minty.

Jane Shepherd



Film



Murderball



Armoured wheelchairs, tattoos and a healthy dose of cursing – this documentary gives the middle finger to anyone who thinks disabled boys can't be tough. For two-and-a-half years, a team of film-makers followed the US quad rugby team as they competed, trained and drank a lot of beer. Presented in the film is a series of individual narratives on what it means to be a disabled athlete.

Formerly known as Murderball, the testosterone-fuelled game is played on a basketball court by wheelchair users whose chairs are kitted out like tanks. The object is to score goals by whatever means



Murderous intents: Team captain Zupan (right) tackles Canada

necessary – bashing and thrashing each other, and preferably leaving one or two wheelchairs bottom-side-up on the court.

Although the 2002 Swedish world championships and the 2004 Paralympics bookend the

story, the really interesting parts are the testimonials of the players themselves – most of whom have spinal cord injuries.

Team captain Mark Zupan draws you in with his blend of machismo and philosophical observation. Particularly

interesting is the ambiguity of his feelings towards the friend who was drink-driving on the night he received his spinal cord injury. The film weaves this in alongside his aspirations to win gold.

Then there is coach Joe, who played for the US team in his early years until he was passed over for younger players. As revenge, he now coaches the Canada team. We also get insights into his life outside Murderball, including the struggle to relate to his unathletic son. We even get an intimate perspective in hospital after his sudden heart attack.

Triumph, disappointment, reconciliation and keg parties provide the backdrop to this gritty and unscripted taste of real life. Definitely worth seeing.

Elizabeth Choppin

What's on



Festivals

2005's Xposure festival runs from 1 November to 12 December in London. Events include a specially commissioned show, *Mermaid and the Mirror* from Half Moon Theatre, which features sign language. There will be dance performances from StopGAP, Blue Eyed Soul, High Spin, Corali and Cultural Shift. Music events include the Drake Music Project, Club Attitude, Heart 'n' Soul and the Squidz Club.

There are also a whole heap of classes and workshops.

• Tel: 020 8340 5226, www.xposurefestival.com

This year's DaDaFest (Disability and Deaf Arts Festival) runs from 24 November to 3 December with events around the North West. The festival launches with Mat Fraser's *Thalidomide!! A Musical* (right), which weaves the history of the Thalidomide scandal with a love story. Also appearing are comedians Laurence Clark, Steve Day and the Nasty Girls. A selection of films, poetry, dance,



workshops, exhibitions, music and a young people's talent show round off the line-up. The DaDaAwards will be presented on 1 December, with categories including individual performance artist and performance group or company.

• Tel: 0151 707 1733, www.mvdaf.org.uk

Film

London's Disability Film Festival runs at the National Film Theatre from 30 December to 4 November. Films include Liz Crow's *Nectar*, featuring a young deaf man's journey to claim BSL as his natural language.

• Tel: 020 7928 3232, www.bfi.org.uk/nft

The Oska Bright Film Festival, run by and for people with learning difficulties, will be held in Brighton on 28 November.

• Tel: 01273 234 734, www.carousel.org.uk

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Red light in green belt

Avril Jackson has had to fight to foster three disabled young people. Now she is battling again – to get planning permission for a home that will fully cater for their needs

Our family is unusual. My husband Simon and I provide a permanent foster home in Ferndown, Dorset, for three profoundly disabled young people who require 24-hour care.

Our family life began in 1990. After teaching in special schools and providing respite care during holidays for several years, becoming a permanent foster parent for profoundly disabled children seemed like a natural choice.

Simon was nervous about taking on such a responsibility as he had no experience of disabled children, but has not looked back since.

I met Mark, an adorable seven-year-old, on a visit to Exeter House School in Salisbury. He has cerebral palsy, severe learning difficulties and a chronic gastro-intestinal condition.

Mark's mum loves him very much but could not care for him and wanted us to. Social services had deemed him "unfosterable" and it took a year to change their minds.

Caring for Mark was hard work – especially when he was ill – but he is a fabulous young man with a wonderful character and a way of making people feel good about themselves. We enjoyed caring for him so much, we looked to foster another disabled youngster. Enter Vicki, now 18, who had been advertised for fostering.

Once again, it took years to argue with social services that we could cope with two children, but I gave up teaching and she came to live with us in 1998. She has a fabulous giggly personality, along with microcephalus, cerebral palsy,



Happy days: Avril with Vicki (left) and Mark

name as she is under a care order. She moved in three years ago and has similar impairments to Vicki.

We have a wonderful family,

no longer be fostered, but these young people are our family and they will live with us for the rest of their lives, so we need to look at a long-term accommodation solution.

Our current family home has been extended over the years to meet the needs of our growing family, but because of space limitations and the layout of rooms, we are now at a point where the safety and dignity of the family is at risk. In the event of a fire, Simon and I could be trapped upstairs, unable to evacuate our family members.

Despite attempts to find

'Over the years we have built a network of local health and social care professionals who support our family and it is essential that our family don't move too far from our current address'

profound learning difficulties and epilepsy. Since moving in with us she has smiled her way through five lots of major surgery.

The latest addition to our family was K, who we cannot

but our youngsters' needs mean we require a great deal of space for beds, hoists, wheelchairs and other equipment, as well as space to carry out caring, therapy and medical tasks.

After the age of 18, you can

suitable alternatives, we have found none. Over the years we have built a network of local health and social care professionals who support our family and it is essential that our family don't move too far from our current address.

Our long-term solution has been to buy a small bungalow on land near to our home with plans to knock it down and build a suitable property. This would need five ground floor bedrooms and bathing areas, as well as a large family area comprising a lounge, dining and kitchen areas. We also need an area for hydrotherapy and physiotherapy. Every room would have double doors for a safe exit.

Ferndown Town Council was in favour of our plans but East Dorset District Council turned us down as the land is green belt and it says our plans are too large; the maximum family property allowed is 140 square metres, but our plan is for a 288 square metre home.

Councils are allowed to overlook their green belt policies in "very special circumstances", but, despite presenting 17 letters of support from professionals, our request has still been rejected.

We wish to demolish an existing rundown property, garage and sheds and put up a single purpose-built bungalow. It is difficult to understand the reasoning behind the refusal. But we are not ready to give up. We are preparing an appeal and also putting in another application for planning permission with an amended design.

Whatever happens, our family will stay together. Simon and I hope we will always be fit enough to give our children as good a life as they enjoy now, for as long as that may be.

Mike Hirsh, head of planning and building control at East Dorset District Council, says that plans were rejected because they "clearly went against both local and national guidelines created to protect the green belt" and while expressing "compassion" for the family, their request did not "warrant a departure" from policy. He adds the council would be "happy to defend its decision" to the independent Planning Inspectorate.

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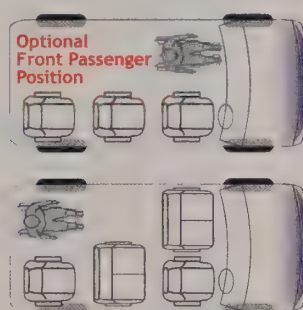


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ILLUSTRATION BY CLARE CURTIS

Dear Rachel

- love and loneliness
- bereavement
- personal problems
- advice and support

Rachel Wilson, who is disabled herself, has spent many years advising on disability matters. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Legroom need ignored

I was injured in the last war and have shrapnel in my back. I often travel by air and, because I am tall, I need a seat with additional legroom, otherwise I find myself in pain. Despite this, I always have great difficulty making sure that I get the kind of seat I need. Len, Bracknell

If your condition means you need a seat with extra legroom for medical reasons then this should be taken into account. UK airlines adhere to a voluntary code of practice, which means – in theory – that they will consider disabled passengers' needs. Unfortunately they do not always do so and air transport is not yet covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), so you have no legal redress.

When making travel arrangements, you should make it clear that your request is not an aesthetic matter or an

issue of preference, but a need. It is also worth writing to the relevant companies to complain about the difficulties you have had. This might help them change their policies.

Funds to retrain

My friend has had to give up her career as a child-care professional after developing serious mobility problems. She wants to retrain as a child psychologist and has found an appropriate distance learning course, but cannot find funding. What financial help is available to her? Di, by email

Lack of funding is often a problem for students, but I would suggest that if your friend has identified a specific course she is interested in, it may be worth contacting SKILL, the National Bureau for Disabled Students.

They provide support, information and advice on all aspects of further and higher

education for disabled people. They provide some funding for equipment and would be able to advise your friend on the best sources of potential funding for the course she wants to follow.

• **SKILL**, tel: 0207 657 2337, www.skill.org.uk

VAT relief on cars

I am in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and buy my cars privately. Am I entitled to claim VAT exemption when getting a new car and on repairs? Harold, by email

Buying a new VAT-free car can save you as much as £1,500 on a £10,000 car. You will need to contact HM Revenue and Customs for details on how to go about it. There are specific rules governing the extent of the driver's disability and the use to which the vehicle is put.

The vehicle will have to be bought new and modified before delivery, all modifications have to be

Autism test nightmare

Last year I asked my GP if I could be tested for autism. I am sure I have been on the autistic spectrum all my life – I find socialising almost impossible, have difficulty communicating and have had a lifetime of being bullied. To my horror, I wasn't tested for autism but was instead referred to a psychiatrist, who seems to believe I have a mental health problem. I have been offered counselling by Mind, but am worried I will be sectioned if I refuse to go. Name and address supplied

I am sorry to hear of your frustration at not having your condition properly assessed and that your contact with doctors has caused you so much anxiety. You cannot be sectioned for turning down counselling, so try not to worry too much.

You are entitled to support from someone at your next psychiatrist's appointment. This can be anyone you choose. Your local branch of Mind may be able to provide an advocate for you. If you are unhappy with your treatment, you can also return to your GP with your advocate and ask for a new referral.

If you would prefer someone who is completely independent, try contacting an independent advocate in your area. You have a right to be listened to.

• **Advocacy Resource Exchange**, tel: 0208 880 4547, email: arx@advocacyresource.net

included in the main invoice and you cannot claim after you have made the purchase. Further advice is available from the Disabled Drivers' Association (DDA) and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (DDMC).

• www.hmrc.gov.uk or tel: 0845 010 9000

• **DDA** tel: 0870 770 3333, www.dda.org.uk

• **DDMC** tel: 01832 734 724, www.ddmc.org.uk

Mental health at work

I have depression and panic attacks that have worsened since leaving university. I am in my first real job and sometimes I need time off because I

need to see my GP or because my sleep has been disrupted. I have not disclosed my condition to my employer, but would do so if I knew I had protection under the DDA.

Should I tell them? Name supplied, via email

In order to be covered by the DDA, conditions relating to mental health must be "clinically well recognised".

If you decide to disclose your condition to your employer, the fact you have been receiving medication from your GP should make it easy for you to verify your condition, should your employer ask for it. They cannot oblige you or your GP to disclose details of your medical records – these are confidential.

It is also worth considering whether there is anything about your work that has caused your condition to worsen. If there is, it is worth talking to your employer about it.



Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psycho-therapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882111.

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Websites

Community Equipment, an online venture from RNID, RNIB and British Red Cross, has a database of specialist equipment. Users can register for free and can also place items for sale. See www.communityequipment.com

The Partnership Yorkshire and Humberside, one of eleven special educational needs regional partnerships sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills, has a website aimed at people working with or caring for young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs. See www.the-partnership-yh.org.uk

Pecan, which helps people overcome barriers into employment, has information and courses, including an ICT course for deaf and hearing impaired people. See www.pecan.org.uk

In last month's DN we gave details of a new DVD from Jobcentre Plus. People who would like to view a copy should ask in their local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office.

EASYKIT

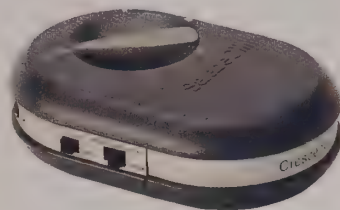
Lucy Andrews answers your questions

"My mother lives on her own and has always managed fine, but I'm aware that she's not as agile as she used to be and her hearing has got worse. She has the TV turned up so loud she can't hear when the doorbell or phone rings, and then I worry because she hasn't answered my calls. Can you suggest anything that might help her?"

You don't say whether your mother has had her hearing checked recently, and whether she is a hearing aid user. Often when hearing gradually declines it goes unnoticed, so a visit to her GP, who can refer her on to the hospital hearing clinic if necessary, would be advisable. Your mother may also be able to get some help through her local council social services department who will have a sensory disabilities team to advise on environmental hearing aids.

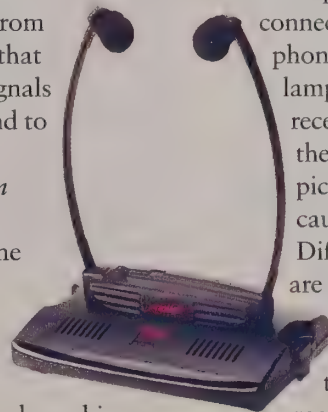
There is a range of equipment that can make hearing easier, and devices that can be used as an alert. TV sound can be amplified by a simple device that plugs into the headphone socket of the TV and relays sound to the listener by headphones or a headset. A volume control allows the sound to be adjusted as required. If your mother wears a hearing aid, she could opt for a neck loop instead as this cuts out background noise, so that sound from the TV is

clearer. She would need to switch her hearing aid to the 'T' position to pick up sound via the loop. The Crescendo 20 system by Sarabec (*below*) has the option of headphones, a headset or a neck loop. From £49.50. Tel: 01642 247 789, minicom: 01642 251 310, www.sarabec.co.uk



If trailing flex between the TV and headphones is a problem, there are cordless systems such as the Infralight, also from Sarabec (*right*), that uses infra-red signals to transmit sound to stethoscope-style earphones. From £89.

There are some simple ways of alerting someone to a knock at the door. A portable door chime brings the sound of the bell



closer. When the doorbell is pushed, a signal is transmitted to a receiver that the user can carry with them, and the doorchime will sound. Connevens supply the Libra range which has a choice of chime tone and varies in range – longer range receivers can be used in the garden. From £18. Tel: 01737 247 571, minicom: 01737 243 134, www.connevens.com

The Lamp Alert by B & H Designs (*below*) can be used as an alert for both the doorbell and the telephone.

The doorbell transmitter is wired to the doorbell, while the phone transmitter connects directly to the phone socket. A household lamp is plugged into the receiver so that when there's a call, the receiver picks up the signal and causes the lamp to flash. Different flash patterns are used to distinguish between the doorbell and the telephone. £62 for receiver, £32 for transmitters. Tel: 01462 893 039,



www.bh-designs.co.uk

The Bellman system from RNID Sound Advantage is a flexible system to alert the user to sound from a range of sources including telephone, doorbell and smoke detector. The system can include a flashing beacon and a vibrating pager. Components of the system can be bought separately or in packs to suit a particular need and purpose. From £53. Tel: 0870 789 8855, minicom: 01733 238 020, www.rnid.org.uk/shop

For information on other products to help with hearing difficulties, contact the DLF helpline. Tel: 0845 130 9177,

minicom: 020 7432 8009 or email: advice@dlf.org.uk. A local Disabled Living Centre can also offer help. Addresses are on the Disabled Living Centres Council's website: www.dlcc.org.uk Lucy Andrews is a senior advisor at the DLF

If you have got a question you would like Lucy to answer, email editor@disabilitynow.org.uk or post it to the usual address.

In last month's Easykit, we mentioned the Nokia 1100 mobile phone. Some readers have experienced difficulties getting this in shops. While it is still advertised on the Nokia website (www.nokia.co.uk) with a link to buy from the Carphone Warehouse, some retailers are choosing to stock the 1101 which has similar features and a similar look.

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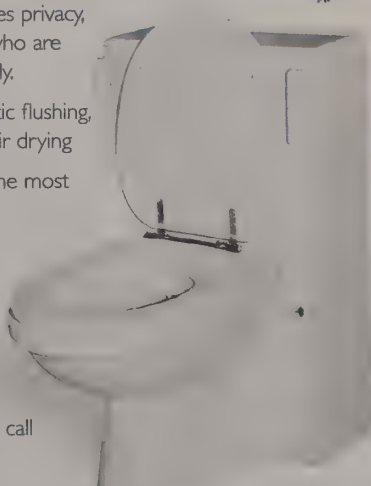
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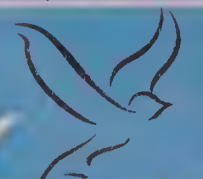
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What's on

Mental Health Today will be at the Business Design Centre in London on 2 November. The event will include exhibitors and seminars, as well as zones including training and career development, art and performance and healthy living. From £20. Tel: 0870 890 1080, www.mhtodaylondon.com

Optua (formerly Rethink Disability) is holding a conference titled Give Us a Break! on 3 November in Ipswich. The event will focus on respite care and will include speakers and workshops. Tel: 01449 770 127, www.optua.org.uk

Techshare 2005 will be held at Jury's Inn in Birmingham on 17 and 18 November. The conference will explore technology for blind and visually impaired people, and will include speakers. Tel: 0870 013 9555, www.rnib.org.uk/techshare

The Choices & Rights Disability Coalition in Hull and East Riding is holding a conference titled It's your life – what are you going to make of it! at the KC Stadium in Hull on 23 November. The event will examine how disabled people can live independent lives, and will include an appearance from comedian Laurence Clark. Tel: 01482 878 778, www.choicesandrights.org.uk

The Harrogate Care Show will be held on 23 and 24 November at the Harrogate International Centre. The show is aimed at people in the nursing, healthcare and care home sectors, and will include fire safety seminars. To find out more and to pre-register, tel: 01425 470 666, www.careshow.co.uk

Appointments

Jacqui Christy James has become director of Scope Cymru, in a newly created post.

Rachell Bastikar is the new vice-chair of the British Deaf Association (BDA).

Charles Mayer has become sales director for disability access consultancy Configure.

Publications

I Thought in the War, by Lawrence Sutton, who is physically disabled, discusses war from WW2 to Iraq. £10. 73 Lancing Road, Orpington, BR6 0QU, www.planetree.com

To the Mountain Top: Meeting the Challenge of Disability, by Larry Walters, is an autobiographical account of living with cerebral palsy. £13.90. Tel: 01768 342 300, www.hayloft.org.uk

I Cannot Walk But I Can Crawl: A Long Life with Cerebral Palsy, by Joan Ross, is an autobiographical account published by Sage in association with Scope. £17.99. Tel: 020 7324 8500, www.sagepublications.com

The MS Trust has produced *MS Together*, a DVD of information for people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). £7.50. Tel: 01462 476 700, www.ms-trust.org.uk

Pavilion has published a revised edition of *Staff Supervision in Social Care*. The book is aimed at giving supervisors

a resource to develop and improve clinical supervision, including information and research. £59.95. Tel: 01273 666 707, www.pavpub.com

The Multiple Sclerosis Society has published a guide titled *Benefits and MS*, the latest in its MS Essentials series. Write to: Information Team, MS Society, MS National Centre, 372 Edgware Road, Staples Corner, London, NW2 6ND, or go to www.ms-society.org.uk to download a copy.

Websites

The Home Counties Cochlear Implant Group (HCCIG) gives advice, information and support to people with cochlear implants or awaiting one, including open days and support groups. Tel: 020 8360 0514, email: hccig@hotmail.com

Text-Connect is a new communication service for hearing impaired people aimed at easing communication with service organisations. Tel: 01952 820 453, www.text-connect.co.uk

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• Cars/vans/caravans

CHAIRMAN ESCORT 55 1.3 M reg, MOT expires Feb, 49.5k miles. With Gowrings lowered floor conversion. £1,750 ono. Tel: 01622 670549 (Maidstone).

RENAULT KANGOO 1.4RXE, X reg, navy blue, 20.5k miles, MOT expires June 06, e/windows and e/side mirrors, sunroof for wheelchair user, JVC CD player. Wheelchair conversion by Davis of Sevenoaks incl lowering suspension, 4 point manual tie-down and manual ramp. Carries 5 incl wheelchair. In very good condition, £7,500 ono. Tel: 01732 771365 (Kent) or mobile: 07768 040700.

CHAIRMAN FORD ESCORT. With Gowrings conversion, 1990, 1.3L (petrol). Nearly £700 spent on refurbishment earlier this year, including stainless steel replacement rear floor, new carpeting and corrosion protection. Lovely drive: no engine or gear-box problems. Vehicle no longer needed. £750. Tel: 0117 9792301 (Bristol).

SEAT ALHAMBRA 1.9 Tdi, auto, V reg (Nov 99), full MOT and tax til March 06, pas, air con, front e/windows, c/locking, alloy wheels, roof light panel. With Brotherwood raised roof conversion (59" internal headroom), carries 2 rear carer seats plus infill seat when no wheelchair. In immaculate condition, only 2 owners and 44k miles. £12,500 ono. Tel: 07973 228691 (Surrey).

VW CARAVELLE 2.4 1997 R reg, red, diesel, MOT and tax expires May 06, pas. Wheelchair conversion with RICON rear lift, 3 removable seats in back with 2 further wheelchair runners underneath: carries 6 plus wheelchair, 3 plus 3 wheelchairs. Only 2 owners from new, fsh, in good condition, only 53.5k miles, £7,950 ono. Tel: 01929 554465 (Poole).

RENAULT MASTER 2.5, grey metallic, diesel, 1999 S reg, 45k miles, MOT Feb 06, pas. Wheelchair conversion with rear ramp, 2 removable rear seats so can carry 1 or 2 wheelchairs (with tracking and clamps). In vgc, £4,500 ono. Tel: 01777 871549 or mobile: 07730 609046 (North Notts).

FORD TRANSIT MINIBUS, fitted with RICON 6 way seat (passenger) and tail lift, tracking, clamps and Carters electric wheelchair, £1,000 ono. Tel: 0161 766 5985 (Bury).

NISSAN PRAIRIE K reg with Brotherwood conversion, high roof with E&J electric wheelchair. £1,000 ono. Tel: 0161 766 5985 (Bury).

RENAULT SCENIC 1.6, auto, only 15 months' old, genuine reason for sale. Full conversion with front passenger entry for wheelchair user (Casey). 5 seater, e/windows and e/mirrors, 2 sunroofs, CD player, Super Guard treated. In immaculate condition, only 8k miles. £10,000 ono. Tel: 0113 266 4489 (Leeds).

FIAT DOBLO 1.9JTD Elx, 2004, blue, e/windows, air con, pas, CD player. With Automotive conversion incl folding ramp, 2 quick release seats, carries driver, 2 passengers and a wheelchair occupant or driver and 4 passengers with room for wheelchair stowage. Sale due to circumstance, only 2k miles, in immaculate condition, £10,850 ono. Tel: 01207 503072 (Durham) or mobile: 07956 658973.

TOYOTA HIACE 2.5 diesel, X reg (Nov 2000) 42k miles, very good condition. Full MOT, rear RICON wheelchair lift, pas, electric windows and electric mirrors. Very roomy, £8,500. Will be willing to travel around West Country. Tel: 01409 261517 (North Devon).

RENAULT KANGOO RN 1.4 2001, manual, adapted for wheelchair access by Mobility Solutions, locking belts, two seats in back, full service history, one owner from new, blue, 30k miles, vgc £5,595. Tel: 020 8836 8890 (Blackheath). Email: ian.maz@btinternet.com

TOYOTA HIACE POWERBUS Y reg, silver. First registered March 2001, 2.5 litre, diesel, owned from new with fsh, 12 months' MOT, vgc, just less than 35,500 miles. Lewis Reed adapted with hydraulic operated RICON tail lift. Seats driver, 3 passengers and one wheelchair user. £7,500 ono. Please tel Mrs Leslie Hickin: 01226 204784

CHRYSLER GRAND VOYAGER 3.3, complete with Balder power wheelchair (costing over £17,000). Conventional left hand drive or right hand drive for wheelchair user with joystick. Bought in 2002, only one owner from new, carries 4 with wheelchair or 7 without. Electric sliding door and electric ramp, all controls remote control operated. Fsh, in excellent condition, Car cost £63,960, asking £30,000 ono for car together with wheelchair. Tel: 01753 886020 (car situated in Reading).

FORD TRANSIT 280 2.4 Tdi, semi high roof, medium wheel base, Durashift or manual, pas, tinted windows, carpets. Braun side-lift for separate wheelchair access. Bekker single lever hand controls, 6 way electric driver's seat plus 2 passengers. Under 2k miles, registered April 04, cost £24,500, asking £15,500 ono. Tel: 01451 822773 (Cheltenham) or mobile: 07855 614657.

VW CARAVELLE VR6 'S' reg. (Nov 1998). Metallic pale blue. Invatravel conversion with RICON side under-floor wheelchair lift. 7 seats or 6 plus wheelchair, plenty of luggage space. Automatic gearbox, air-conditioning, cruise control, electric windows/mirrors, parking sensors, radio/cassette, central locking. Just serviced, MOT Feb 06, tax May 06. 48,500 miles, Excellent condition. £8950 Tel: 01635 31068 (Newbury, Berks).

NISSAN BLUEBIRD GL Estate, C reg (1985), only one careful female owner from new. Comfortable, clean, pale metallic green with black trim with pas. 127k miles, fsh, MOT until March 2006. £300, willing to deliver in or around Hertfordshire. Large boot for wheelchair or other disability aid. Tel: 01923 245338 (Rickmansworth, Herts)

CHAIRMAN FORD ESCORT 1.4, 1993 L reg, with Gowrings conversion incl rear ramp and lowering device. 35k miles, taxed until Jan 2006, MOT until August 2006. £1,500 ono. Tel: 01635 201622 (Newbury).

ROOF RACK FOR Renault Kangoo van, professional style (lots of bars), £75. Tel: 01865 556493 (Oxford)

CHAIRMAN CITROEN DISPATCH 1.9 diesel, 03 reg (December), 9k miles, silver, with Gowrings conversion incl hydraulic lowering system and rear ramp. Air con, electrically heated door mirrors, remote central locking, 4 seats and room for wheelchair. In immaculate condition, only one owner from new, £12,995 ono. Tel: 020 8449 9664 or email: dthnick@hotmail.com

FIAT DOBLO 1.9, diesel, registered Jan 04, conversion by Constables incl lowered floor, high floor, folding ramp and wheelchair clamping system. 67" entry height, one back folding seat, e/windows, central locking, pas, only 2 owners. 16k miles, first class condition, £9,750 ono. Tel: 01323 440192 (Eastbourne) Email: roy@cottage10.freeserve.co.uk

VW CARAVELLE 2.4 GLD 1996. Constables conversion with RICON side lift. Tracking for 1 or 2 wheelchairs. Metallic Blue. 101k miles. Excellent condition. Recent full service and MOT. £5700 ono. Tel: 01440 708845 (West Suffolk) or sjf@plextek.co.uk

CHAIRMAN KANGOO 1.4 RN, Y reg (July 2001), 29k miles, one owner from new. Good condition. One rear seat, lowered floor and electric belts, carries 4 including wheelchair. MOT expires July 06, £5,750 ono. Tel: 020 8883 7301 or mobile: 07954 6342085. Email: tudorspencer@hotmail.com

VW SHARAN TDI 1.9 1998 (S reg), diesel, 50k miles, metallic green. With full wheelchair conversion incl rear access ramp with electric locking belts. Carries 6 people with wheelchair. E/windows, air con, pas, CD player, only 1 previous owner, full MOT. £10,500 ono. Tel: 01767 680203 (Beds) or mobile: 07791 008285.

VW CARAVELLE 2.4 diesel, electric side ramp, 85k miles, N reg (1996), 6 months' tax and 11 months' MOT. Metallic blue with pas, flip sunroof, electric wing mirrors. Front passenger seat swivels, electric side ramp and floor tracking by Invatravel, carries 5 with wheelchair or 7 without (2 removable seats). Reasonable condition – serviced yearly. One owner from new, £6,500 ono. Tel: 01329 230149 (Fareham).

PEUGEOT EUROBUS TWIN Motability van, 2 litre, diesel, first registered December 04, taxed until June 06. Pas, air con, electric windows and mirrors, CD player, driver air bag. Will take 2 wheelchairs via ramp in rear with automatic electric winch. 2 passenger seats one behind the other (behind driver). Below 5k miles, only one owner from new, bereavement forces sale. Cost £25,000 new, asking £15,500 ono. Tel Ray Bedwell, evenings and weekends: 01474 356598 (Gravesend) or day: 020 8691 7000.

MERCEDES V280 AMBIENTE, auto, fitted Interbility rear hydraulic wheelchair lift and tie-down kit for single chair. New MOT, 50k miles, service history, fully loaded including leather (6 seats or 5 plus wheelchair). Excellent condition, absolute bargain, £10,999, no canvassers. Tel: 01243 605160 (Chichester) or mobile: 07851 227674.

CHAIRMAN RENAULT KANGOO 1.4RN, X reg (2000), metallic green and pas. Gowrings conversion incl manual ramp with 2 rear seats. Fsh, only 26k miles and 1 owner from new. £7,995 ono. Tel: 01252 664969 (Fleet, Hants) or mobile: 07808 778543.

NISSAN SERENA 1.6LX, Islander blue, P reg (1996), only 44k miles. With Brotherwood conversion incl wheelchair access ramp with inertia belts and electric step. Carries up to 6 people plus wheelchair. In very good condition, full MOT, only 2 owners, £4,500 ono. Tel: 01458 850253 (Glastonbury) or 01672 511566 (Marlborough).

RENAULT KANGOO AUTOMATIC, 2001, Constables conversion, vgc. Delivery possible, 31k miles, £8,000. Tel: 01924 477135 (Wakefield).

MERCEDES-BENZ V220 CDI Trend, automatic, 1999. Only 25k miles. Dark violet with grey velour interior, privacy glass, air con, anti-lock brakes, Sony XR-C310R 40W x 4 radio/cassette. Fsh, fitted with a portaramp clearview wheelchair ramp, Unwin 4-point point wheelchair harness and double inertia real seatbelt. Can accommodate up to 4 people in standard Mercedes seats plus 1 wheelchair user. Comes with 2 unused Mercedes seats which can be installed in central row instead of wheelchair. One owner from new. £8,500 ono. Tel: 01452 540783

TOYOTA HIACE POWERVAN 2.4, silver, diesel, reg 2001 (51 plate). Lewis Reed conversion incl manual ramp, 5 seats (1 removable) and space for 1 wheelchair, e/windows and e/mirrors and pas. MOT expires Aug 06, only 18,500 miles and one owner from new, £9,750 ono. Tel: 01296 431635 (Aylesbury) or work: 01296 619104.

VEXEL QUOVIS SHUTTLE, diesel, 04 53 plate. In yellow over silver, only covered 700 miles from new, e/windows and e/mirrors, alloy wheels, stereo. Hand controls, available for less than the cost of the adaptations to convert a typical van or mpv to perform the same role. TRULY LOW RUNNING COSTS, at least 100 miles to the gallon! A car purpose built to be driven directly from a wheelchair for those with reduced or impaired mobility. Will greatly expand the opportunity for independence for a disabled driver. Asking £8,999. Tel: 07790 266613 or: 01527 541112 (Redditch).

• Wheelchairs/scooters

JAZZY MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR 1103. In vgc, adjustable seat, range up to 25 miles, max speed 4.5 mph. £600 ono. Tel: 020 8402 2282.

PRESTIGE 4-WHEEL electric scooter with charger, max speed 8 mph, 25 miles range. Front and rear lights, indicators, with front and rear baskets. Not even a year old, sale due to circumstance, in perfect condition, only used once. Cost £3,500, asking £1,500 ono. Tel: 020 8894 3485 (Twickenham).

TWO WHEELCHAIR RAMPS, heavy duty, alloy, suitable for large Estate car or van. £125. Tel: 01708 709315 (Hornchurch, Essex).

ENIGMA ENERGI POWERCHAIR with kerb climber, dual control and comfortable cushion. Range 15 miles on full charge, 5 speed settings. With 2 adjustable ramps, hardly used, as new and in very good condition, with full instruction manual, original cost £3,500, asking £1,500 ono. Tel: 01759 304736 (East Yorkshire).

PRIDE JET 3 electric wheelchair, in very good condition. £500 ono. Tel: 020 7491 0219.

EAGLE SOLA HS890 4-wheel scooter, with high/low switch, grade climbable 12 degrees, 25 miles on full charge. Front and rear lights, indicators, horn button, electric brake, basket. Only a year old, with full instruction manual, in excellent condition and very little use. Cost £2,600, asking £1,200 ono. Tel: 020 8866 5542 (Harrow).

POWERTEC F45 WHEELCHAIR, purple metallic, right hand control, brand new batteries. Newly serviced, £750 ono. Tel: 01777 871549 or mobile: 07730 609046 (North Notts).

JAZZY 1120 MOTORIZED wheelchair in vgc, 4 years old, one owner, very versatile, dual controls for user and carer £795 Tel: 020 8836 8890 (Blackheath). Email: ian.maz@btinternet.com

EXTREME FOUR X off road range electric powerchair. Max speed 8 mph, max range 17 miles. Individually motored wheels and counterbalanced chassis. Guaranteed and serviced by Wheelchair Corporation. Cost £9,500, asking £2,850 ono. View at www.wheelchair-corporation.co.uk. Tel: 07074 465228 (Langham, Scottish Borders) or email: david@druidshore.com

ALBER E-MOTION WHEELS, battery operated which attach to rigid frame wheelchair. Particularly useful for people with upper body strength. Battery charger, batteries, wheelchair adaptor bracket and manual included. Cost £2,995, used only once, asking £1,850 ono. Tel: 020 8925 4999 (NE London).

VESSA ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR with charger and batteries, together with shopping bag. Max range 20 miles, variable speed settings. Vgc, £499 ono. Tel: 01202 252428 (Poole).

RUBY SUNRISE MEDICAL powerchair. Virtually unused, charger, basket. £1,445 new, will sell for £600 ono. Tel 0161 427 2775 (Stockport).

SHOPRIDER PEREZ 4-WHEEL scooter, suspension, adjustable seater, up to 21 stone, 20 miles range on full charge, variable speed settings up to 4 mph, cane holder and basket, lights and indicators. Cost £3,000 for scooter and accessories in May 2005, still under warranty, asking £1,500 ono. Tel: 020 7385 7761 or mobile: 07973 124483.

BARGAIN: PRIDE 3-wheel scooter with charger plus fully automated electric hoist, up/down, in/out, £3,000 new in 2003, will accept £1,200 ono for quick sale. Private or trade, Email: owe.dee@ntlworld.com or Box no: 317

• Bicycles/Trikes

ADULT SIZE TRIKE, bright orange with 5 gears, dynamo front and rear lights, large rear basket. Perfect condition, £120. Tel: 01733 325353 (Peterborough).

Continued see pg 45

DN Your DN needs you

As we prepare for the new year, **DN** is calling on professional writers, photographers and illustrators to bring fresh ideas to our pages while maintaining our high standards of journalism.

In keeping with our determination to properly represent readers, we are hoping to expand our already strong team of disabled freelancers. Can you use your experiences to help us produce excellent features, columns, arts reviews, shopping and equipment reviews and illustrations?

We want to hear from established and qualified journalists as well as those with suitable expertise, such as occupational therapists who can review equipment and councillors who can write political pieces.

You must have experience of meeting editors' briefs, including word counts, and deadlines. If you have the right experience, please contact us, including your CV, examples of your published work and ideas for articles or illustrations you could produce for **DN**.

Email sarah.hobson@scope.org.uk or call 020 7619 7324.

For sale (cont'd pg 45)

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02 Chrysler Grand Voyager - Diesel, Low floor Lux MPV
53 Toyota Powerbus - Access lift, diesel, as totally new
53 Mercedes Vaneo - 1.6 auto, lowered floor, 4 seats
54 Fiat Doblo Hi Roof - Diesels, 5 seats, wheelchair access
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V Toyota Powervan - 1.6 Silver, 4 seats, low floor, low miles
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RENAULT MASTER SWB 2.2 LTR DIESEL Date first registered: 15/08/2001, Blue, 5 seats, Manual, 18,000 miles, Air Bag, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking, Side load door, Twin front passenger seat. **£10,700**

PEUGEOT BOXER SWB 2.0 HDI Date first registered: 24/05/2003, White, 7 seats, Manual, 21,000 miles, Air Bag, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Option 9 seater W/C access, At additional cost, Power Steering, Side load door, Twin front passenger seat. **£11,950**

VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER SWB 2.5 TDI TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 06/08/2001, Red, 5 seats, 24,000 miles, Automatic Transmission, Full width lightweight ramp, Hand controls, Electric park brake, Swivel base drivers seats, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Side load door, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£11,500**

VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER SWB 2.5 TDI TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 25/11/1998, Green, 4 seats, 42,000 miles, Automatic Transmission, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Electric Winch, Lowering rear air suspension, Power Steering, Rear Saloon Heater, Side load door, Single front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£6,800**

RENAULT MASTER SWB 2.2 DCI Date first registered: 22/11/2002, Dark Green, 5 seats, Manual, 14,000 miles, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking, RICON CLEARWAY electric wheelchair lift, Side load door, Twin front passenger seat. **£12,695**

VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER T4 1.9 LTR TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 27/03/2000, Blue, 4 seats, Manual, 27,000 miles, RICON CLEARWAY electric wheelchair lift, Short wheelbase, Single front passenger seat, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Power Steering. **£9,995**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.6 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 14/11/2003, Green, 3 seats, 13,000 miles, 5 door, A.B.S, Air Bag, Automatic Transmission, Electric reels, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking, Electric Mirrors, Electric windows, Alloy wheels. **£11,300**

RENAULT MASTER SWB 2.2 DCI TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 01/08/2002, Blue, 5 seats, 5 speed manual, 15,000 miles, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player CD multichanger, Remote Central Locking, RICON CLEARWAY electric wheelchair lift. **£11,950**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.4 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 23/04/2002, Red, 5 speed manual, 7,500 miles, 5 door, Air Bag, Electric reels, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking. **£9,150**

FIAT SCUDO COMBI 2.0 LTR JTD TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 06/03/2003, Blue, 3 seats, Manual, 8,600 miles, 5 door, Air conditioning, Electric Mirrors, Electric reels, Electric windows, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Remote Central Locking, Single front passenger seat. **£12,350**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.4 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 28/07/2000, Metallic Red, Manual, 33,000 miles, 5 door, Electric reels, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Remote Central Locking. **£7,750**

VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER SWB 1.9 LTR TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 09/09/1999, 47,000 miles, Red, 5 seats, Air Bag, Condition: Good, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Manual pull out side step, Electric Winch, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Power Steering, Side load door, Twin front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£6,300**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.5 LTR DIESEL Date first registered: 05/03/2003, Red, 3 seat, Manual, 17,000 miles, 5 door, Air Bag, Electric reels, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Remote Central Locking. **£9,700**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.2 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 19/09/2002, Red, 3 seats, Manual, 17,000 miles, 5 door, Electric reels, Electric Winch, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, One rear saloon seat, Power Steering. **£8,995**

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• Recruitment (on page 41 to 46)



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

APPOINTMENTS TO THE BRECON BEACONS, SNOWDONIA AND PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITIES

Wales' National Park Authorities are special purpose local authorities, responsible for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these special areas and for promoting enjoyment and understanding of the Parks by the public. The Park Authorities are also under a duty to seek to foster the socio-economic well being of the Park communities in carrying out these responsibilities.

As well as being the Local Planning Authority for their area, each Park Authority also plays a key role in supporting the Assembly's sustainable development and social inclusion objectives. It does this by working in partnership with other organisations, including local community groups, supporting community initiatives through, for example, the Sustainable Development Fund and increasing countryside access opportunities for all.

The Welsh Assembly Government is now looking to appoint Six new members - two to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, three to the Snowdonia National Park Authority and one to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. The role of Members is to provide effective leadership for the individual Park Authorities, to help develop strategic plans for the future and to ensure that the Park Authorities' main business is handled efficiently and effectively.

To succeed in this role it is important that you understand the purposes for which the National Parks were designated. You must be able to bring a national perspective to the work of the Park Authority. Experience in areas of direct relevance to the needs of the Parks such as conservation of the natural, historic and cultural environment, planning architecture, tourism, outdoor recreation, community activities, and farming and forestry would be very desirable. You should also be able to demonstrate an awareness of the interests of all those who live or work in, or who visit the Parks.

Able to commit a minimum of three days per month to Park Authority business (attendance at key meetings, etc), as a member of a Park Authority, you will be expected to work constructively as part of a team to develop and take forward the Park Authority's strategic agenda. Members will receive an annual allowance, as well as reasonable expenses.

The ability to speak Welsh is desirable, but not essential.

It is the policy of the National Assembly for Wales to promote and integrate equality of opportunity into all aspects of its business including appointments to public bodies. It welcomes and encourages applications from groups currently under-represented including women, minority ethnic communities and people with a disability. The principles of fair and open competition will apply and appointments will be made on merit.

For an application pack and further details, please contact Public Appointments Unit, National Assembly for Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ tel: 029 2082 3042/3068, or fax: 029 2082 6869 or e-mail: publicappointments@wales.gsi.gov.uk

The closing date for receipt of applications is 4 November 2005. Application forms received after this date will not be considered. It is expected to hold interviews during January 2006.

A large print, braille or audio version of this advert can be obtained by faxing a request to 029 2082 6869

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• Holidays (cont'd pg 43)

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• Recruitment (on page 41 to 46)

Personal assistant-carer wanted for a disabled lady in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. Sleep in when on duty. Able to drive. Application form and job description from: Dorcas Munday MBE, C/o 4 Osborn Close, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 2AW.

• Holidays (cont'd)

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"Holiday Care Award Winners"**

Holiday Cottages designed for wheelchair users and their families. Rural setting with superb views. Dogs welcome. Wood burning stoves and daily meal service.
Please ring or write for colour brochure.
R&N Hall, Penrose Burden, St Breward, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4LZ. Telephone Bodmin (01208) 850277 or 850617
www.penroseburden.co.uk

**10 MINUTES
FROM DISNEYLAND**

Florida villa owned by paraplegic. Sleeps up to 12, fully accessible and large. King size bed with ensuite bathroom. wc and wheel-in shower. Large pool with water operated seat for a disabled person. A holiday you can take with confidence. Contact John Gillett on: 01805 601147.

Altinkum - Turkey

2 & 3 Bed, Sleeps 6 & 8. Brand New Fully Wheelchair Accessible Luxury Accommodation on Holiday Complex. Includes, Ramps, 3 Pools, Hoist, Wheel-in Shower, Grab Rails, Raised Toilet, Wide Doors/Corridors and More. Visit www.DisabledDestinationAbroad.com Tel: 07709 880532.

Support for disabled people

If you have a disability or health condition that affects your chances of finding or keeping a job, ask to see a Disability Employment Adviser. Disability Employment Advisers are based in Jobcentre Plus offices and Jobcentres and offer a wide range of advice and support. They can help you find a job, or stay in work if you are already employed.

The specialist service that Disability Employment Advisers provide, includes:

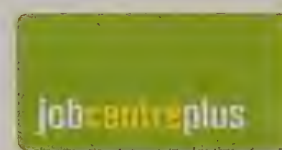
- advice on finding and keeping a job
- support with benefit entitlement and programmes like New Deal, and
- advice to employers on employing disabled people.

Find out what additional help you can get by visiting our website.

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Jobseeker Direct: 0845 6060 234

Textphone: 0845 6055 255



Including Jobcentres and social security offices



ICON

This is City Hall, the GLA's impressive HQ near Tower Bridge. If you'd like to know more about working for London's government, go to www.london.gov.uk

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Taking pride in a diverse workforce.

• Conference



Assist UK
Practical Solutions for Independence

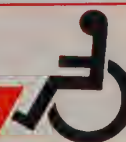
**Improving Life Chances - Turning Strategy into Action,
2nd & 3rd November 2005, Conference, London, with
keynote speaker Anne McGuire, Minister for Disabled
People. Contact Assist UK (formerly the Disabled Living
Centres Council on 0870 770 2866.**

• Accommodation



0800 007 5000 www.cashhelps.com
CASH HELPS A.P.S

**PROBLEMS SELLING YOUR ADAPTED
PROPERTY? CALL 24/7 FREE**



- Searching for accessible or adapted property?
 - Accessible or adapted property to sell or let?
 - Looking for an approved estate agent?
- The Accessible Property Register
web: www.accessible-property.org.uk
Tel: 0114 2307058

LINEAGE ADVERTS - Due to lack of space on this issue, there is no lineage form. To place a lineage advert, please use the form in the October issue. Alternatively, contact Patrick Durham-Matthews: Tel: 020 7619 7320, E-mail: patrick.durhammatthews@scope.org.uk



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY



Board Members for England and Wales

c. 3 days a month at £200 per diem, plus expenses

As an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Home Office, the Youth Justice Board oversees the operation of the youth justice system and advises the Home Secretary on effectiveness in reducing juvenile offending. The Board is committed to early positive intervention with young people and develops standards, issues guidance and practical advice, provides grants, promotes good practice, supports local youth offending teams, commissions secure places, monitors performance and commissions research. The Board now seeks new Members to assist in this work.

To work as part of a multi-disciplinary team to:

- Play a key part in helping to deliver targets and objectives set by the Home Office;
- Contribute significantly to the Board's strategic direction, corporate planning and operational efficiency;
- Help develop a range of effective actions that not only reduce youth offending but also tackle the key issues behind it.

In order to succeed, Members will have:

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- An independent, open-minded approach to gender and race in the criminal justice context;
- Significant senior strategic experience in one of the following areas:
Secure Facilities Operational/ Management: Financial, Economic or Contracting; or, Community and Race Relations.

Appointments are initially for three years, with the possibility of extension for up to five more years. The Home Office is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other irrelevant factor. For these particular appointments we welcome applications from women and people with disabilities.

Please see www.odgers.com/8649 for a candidate brief containing applications details, or contact us quoting reference **PRB/8649DN**.

Closing date is 14th November 2005.

Odgers Ray & Berndtson, 11 Hanover Square, London W1S 1JJ;
tel: 020 7529 1016/1123; fax: 020 7529 1009;
email: nfp.response@odgers.com

• Recruitment (on page 41 to 46)



**SOUTH YORKSHIRE
PASSENGER TRANSPORT
EXECUTIVE**

COMMITTED TO EQUALITY IN EMPLOYMENT

Working in partnership with the four South Yorkshire District Councils of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, local public transport operators and many South Yorkshire organisations, the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive is responsible for securing and promoting the best possible public transport network for the South Yorkshire community.

Through our commitment to providing equal opportunities we intend to be an organisation that embraces and encourages diversity and is positive about employing disabled people.

All vacancies are advertised on our website at: www.sypte.co.uk and within local newspapers, alternatively you can call the Human Resources Department on **0114 2211218** for information.

Benefits include a flexible working hours scheme, 26 days holiday per year, a company final salary based pension scheme and a free countywide TravelMaster providing unlimited bus, tram and rail travel throughout South Yorkshire.



Awarded for excellence



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Centre of Excellence



POSITIVE ABOUT
DISABLED PEOPLE

The Transport Executive is striving to become an exemplar Equality and Diversity Employer

Equalities Development Librarian
£13,332 - £14,343 pa incl. for 18½ hours per week (job share)
Based at Welwyn Garden City Library, with County-wide responsibility. Relocation package available

Do you want to improve access to library services for people at a disadvantage? We are looking for someone with an understanding of social exclusion and a commitment to equality in service delivery. You will need to be a strategic thinker who can forge policy and service developments from inception to completion.

Do you have excellent communication skills with the ability to train, motivate, influence and negotiate with staff and external partners at all levels? Do you have experience in project management and the confidence to work alone combined with team-working skills? This is an excellent development opportunity for someone who is keen to make a difference.

You should be a Chartered Librarian with a proven track record of initiating, planning and co-ordinating effective library service delivery and a knowledge of social inclusion issues.

For an informal discussion please contact Sue Valentine on 01707 281593.

Apply now online at: www.hertsdirect.org/jobs or telephone for an application pack on 0845 601 4834 at anytime quoting Ref: 5635080.

Closing date: 4 November 2005. Interviews will be held: w/c 21 November 2005.

www.hertsdirect.org/jobs
Making our mark on equality.



• **Services**




enable select

NEWSFLASH

Enable Enterprises' Select now sells disposable and reusable swimming pants for children, teens and adults who require additional protection under swimwear or wetsuits in a pool or while doing watersports.



Come and visit our online shop.
www.enableenterprises.com/select
0800 358 8484



NCIL
**National Centre for
Independent Living**

The National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) seeks new management board members

A centre of excellence, supporting independent living, promoting choices and rights, is seeking new board members to help build our future.

If you:

- Understand the barriers disabled people face in society
- Understand independent living issues
- Have experience of serving on a board of trustees or directors at local, regional or national level

And if you:


- Are a disabled person (75% of the board must be disabled people)
- Have experience (paid or unpaid) of managing staff or projects

Then we would like hear from you.

For an application pack to become a board member (closing date 30th November 2005) please contact: office@ncil.org.uk; tel 020 7587 1663; minicom 020 7587 1177 or write to NCIL, 4th Floor, 20 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TJ.

Information also available in print, on tape, in Braille or by email.

"NCIL is a company limited by guarantee registration no. 4701388"



**Non-Executive
Directors (2 Posts)**

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions seeks to appoint two Non-Executive Directors to the Board of Remploi Ltd, Britain's largest employer of disabled people and the largest provider of the Government's WORKSTEP programme. The Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Company fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Secretary of State in its employment of disabled people. It does this by:

- Establishing the Company's overall strategic direction;
- Ensuring proper use of public funds; and
- Promoting Remploi's corporate identity.

Post 1 - Employment Agency background
The successful candidate will have a proven track record in business development with significant employment agency experience and the ability to operate at a strategic level, particularly in setting the vision and business objectives for public or private organisations. You will have the ability to influence and achieve change within a part-time presence and demonstrate skills in corporate governance.

Post 2 - Trade Union background
The successful candidate will have significant experience as a trade unionist at a senior level, with the ability to provide an impartial analysis of trade union motivations and industrial relations to the Board. You will have the ability to influence and achieve change within a part-time presence.

Direct experience of the issues facing disabled people, either in a personal or work context would also be an advantage in both posts.


The two posts attract remuneration of £7,500 per annum plus expenses. The appointment is initially for a three-year term and board members normally spend about two days a month on Remploi business. Board meetings normally take place at the Company's Headquarters in Coventry.

If you feel that you have the qualities for these posts and can make a contribution to the strategic direction of this high profile business then please email tim.sumption@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk or, write to or telephone Tim Sumption at Jobcentre Plus, Partnerships Division, Level 3, Rockingham House, 123 West Street, Sheffield S1 4ER (Tel: 0114 259 5957) to receive an application pack.

The closing date for applications for these posts is 3 December 2005. Late applications will not be accepted.


Applications are particularly welcomed from disabled people, members of ethnic minority groups and women.


Remploi is an Equal Opportunities Employer.



DWP

Department for
Work and Pensions





• For sale (cont'd)

Powerchairs Mobility Consultants
New and Nearly New, Electric Wheelchairs,
3 and 4 Wheel Scooters.
All models wanted and for sale.
Ring Free anytime
0800 074 6834
All major credit cards accepted

COTSWOLD COTS

Build Cots and Beds for Adults and
Children with Special Needs

We Design And Build Any
Cot or Bed You Need.

New Products Extra Strong Playpens.
Extra Large Stairgates.
Fitted Padded Play Areas.
High Quality Fair prices
Information Phone 01993 842885

**Accessible Vehicle
Register**

We specialise in locating used
vehicles to suit the specific needs
of our customers. If you are
looking for an accessible vehicle
or have one to dispose of, contact
Adam Price. We also supply and
install all forms of access equipment.
01202 814112
adamprice.avr@tiscali.co.uk

Citreon Dispatch 1.9 diesel, 'X' reg,
chairman conversion, one owner, 27k,
F.S.H., oxford blue, lowered floor, 4/5 seats
& wheelchair, winch, ramp, electric belts,
P.A.S. stereo etc. Immaculate condition,
£7,495. Tel: 01948 860906 or 07966 468295.

99 T CHRYSLER GRAND VOYAGER. ADAPTED
TO BE DRIVEN FROM WHEELCHAIR. PACKAGE
INCLUDES VEHICLE & POWERCHAIR. OFFERS
IN THE REGION OF £10,000.00 o.n.o.
Tel: 01536 481693. www.beddowsmotor.co.uk

• Accommodation

CAMBRIDGE – TASTEFULLY ADAPTED 2
bedroom terraced house in convenient
position. Good views & fully adapted
for powered wheelchair user.
Adaptations include through floor lift,
overhead tracking, clos-o-mat. Off
road parking and enclosed mature
garden. Double glazing, gas central
heating. Oiro £175,000. 07733
261218 or getting.moved@gmail.com

OULTON, LOWESTOFT – DETACHED
three-bedroom bungalow in immacu-
late order and fully adapted for
wheelchair user. Quiet location. Large
lounge, attractive conservatory with
access to garden, dining kitchen, utili-
ty room. En-suite level access shower
room, WC, lowered basin. 2nd family
shower room. Double garage.
£255,000. Tel: 01502 589867
www.accessible-property.org.uk

FULLY WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE
wheelchair accessible two bedroom
semi-detached house. Quiet location
South Sheffield convenient for Crystal
Peaks shopping centre and Supertram
network. Living room, dining kitchen.
Stairlift to upper floor. One double,
one single bed + wetroom with roll-in
shower. £95,000 Tel: 01246 269256
www.accessible-property.org.uk

LARGE DETACHED BUNGALOW, 4 miles
from Hereford City. Local shops, pub
and school. 3-4 bedrooms, wheel-in
wet shower room, family bathroom,
kitchen with lowered surfaces
(designed by Design Matters) and level
access throughout. Fully accessible
beautiful landscaped garden with large
decked area. Off street parking, local
bus stop. Offers around £269,000. Tel:
01432 882060 or mobile: 07811 214418.

• Household & Families

ELECTRIC LEG EXERCISER with vari-
able speed control. Keeps legs flexible.
Good condition £100 ono. Tel: 01908
510248 (Milton Keynes).

BOCK ADJUSTABLE BED (electric),
cost £1,750, £500 ono. Tel: 0161 766
5985 (Bury).

• Recruitment (on page 41 to 46)



Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain

Location: Central London

Statutory Committees - Members and Advisers/Assessors (part-time)

Chairmen, Deputy Chairmen, Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, Legal Advisers/Assessors, Lay members

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain is the regulatory and professional body for pharmacy (45,500 member pharmacists and 1,800 pharmacy technicians). To prepare for new legislation the Society is establishing new Statutory Committees: Disciplinary, Health, Investigating, and Registration Appeals. Members will be appointed by an independent Appointments Group.

Task of the Statutory Committees:

Disciplinary, Health and Investigating Committees: to protect the interests and safety of the public by considering allegations. Registration Appeals Committee: to consider and dispose of appeals concerning registration of registrants or potential registrants.

Task of Legal Advisers:

Provide independent legal advice to the Chairman and members of a hearing panel.

Legally Qualified Deputy Chairman (x2) of Disciplinary Committee (solicitors, barristers, advocates).

Legal Advisers (solicitors, barristers, advocates) - pool of 15

- Solicitor or barrister with at least 7 years general qualification; Scotland - advocate or solicitor with at least 7 years standing
- Specialisation in public law
- Up to date knowledge of health care regulatory case law including jurisprudence arising from CHRE High Court referrals

Legally Qualified Deputy Chairman (additional qualifications)

- Experience of chairmanship (senior committee, judicial, tribunal)
- Experience of giving reasoned decisions and drafting conclusions
- Recent judicial/tribunal experience
- Case management

Legal Advisers (advising Health, Investigating and Registration Appeals Committees)

- Experience of giving advice to tribunals or similar bodies
- Legal research and fact management

Lay members x 16

- Experience of representing the interests of the general public
- Never been a registered pharmacist or pharmacy technician

Chairman and Deputy Chairman (Lay) x 6

In addition: experience of chairing meetings

Pharmacists x 12

Pharmacy Technicians x 10

- Pharmacists: practising part of the RPSGB's Register of Pharmacists
- Pharmacy Technicians: practising part of the RPSGB's Voluntary Register for Pharmacy Technicians
- Considerable current or recent experience of pharmacy practice (3 years or more)
- Previous experience of committee or tribunal work

Essential for all applicants:

- General understanding of and interest in the NHS and pharmacy
- Experience of representing the interests of the general public
- Knowledge of healthcare regulatory issues
- Experience of evaluating evidence and making objective decisions
- Experience of report writing, writing deliberations or case notes
- Good communication, intellectual and analytical skills
- Commitment to the Principles of Public Life: - Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership

Estimated time commitment (subject to legislative change)

Term of office 4 years, one renewal. Anticipated days per month: Disciplinary Committee: up to 5; Investigating: up to 2; Health: up to 2. Registration Appeals Committee: up to 6 days a year.

Remuneration (attendance day fee plus expenses) - review pending:

Panel members: £200; Deputy Chairman (Legally qualified): £375; Chairman and Deputy Chairman (Lay): £300; Legal advisers: £750.

For an application pack please email ftpemployment@rpsgb.org or ring 020 7572 2626. Jeanne Thircuir, Recruitment Manager, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN.

Closing date: Friday 11 November 2005. Interviews: December 2005 to April 2006.

We welcome applications from WALES and SCOTLAND.

All appointments follow the Society's equal opportunity guidelines.

Applications cannot be considered for the Disciplinary, Registration Appeals and Health Committees from members or previous members of the RPSGB Council who served since June 2002.



Disability Action Waltham Forest

An Exciting Opportunity in Care Provision Based on a Commitment to Meeting the Needs of Disabled/Elderly People

We are setting up a care agency as a social enterprise within our organisation and we need a manager to help us. You will have NVQ4 in Care or registered manager qualification, be able to get through the registration process then set up and run the agency. You are probably employed at present in an agency or care home so will have a lot of relevant experience.

We can offer:

Salary: Full Time, scp 39 £31,560 (incl London Weighting)

Holidays: 28 days per year

Pension: Stakeholder matched by us up to 6%

For a recruitment pack please contact:

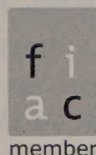
Pat Bhabha, Director, Disability Action WF

Phone: 020 8509 0812

Email: disabilityaction@disaction.org.uk

Write: 1A Warner Road, Walthamstow, E17 7DY

Closing date: Friday 2 December 2005



This enterprise is receiving financial support from the Adventure Capital Fund.



APPA ADJUSTABLE THERAPY bed, 9 months' old, cost £3,000 new, asking £1,200 ono. Tel: 07866 537935 (Edinburgh).

ELECTRIC RECLINING CHAIR, with heater and massager. In good condition, terracotta colour, £100 ono. Tel pm: 01843 842133 (Canterbury).

CCTV COLOUR MAGNIFICATION system, cost £2,500, asking £998. Excellent condition. Tel: 01883 717326.

MOLIFT TRACKING HOIST, cost £2,750, £1,000 ono. Tel: 0161 766 5985 (Bury)

HANDMADE RISE/RECLINE chair (Complete Mobility), made to measure for small lady, independent footrest/backrest, twin motors, pockets, stanguard and extra covers. Velveteen wineberry colour. Cost £2,500 less than 6 months' ago, 4 and a half years' warranty remaining. £1,500 ono. Tel: 01308 868854 (Devon, Dorset, Somerset border).

"Kids First nursery is the only place we feel completely happy to leave him... I do trust Kids more than anyone else"

Mike M, parent of a four year old child with epilepsy, 2004



Chief Executive

London based • Circa £75,000

Kids works closely with parents and carers to give children and young people all the support they need today to fulfil their hopes and dreams tomorrow. Over 600 staff and 200 volunteers in five regions deliver an extensive range of services such as play schemes, adventure playgrounds, home learning and short term breaks, to ensure that over 6000 disabled children throughout the UK get the most out of life. Kids' turnover last year was around £7m with exciting opportunities for growth.

Dr Sam Brier the current Chief Executive is stepping down after 6 successful years. The trustee board wants to identify an innovative professional with an appreciation of the realities of life for disabled children and their families who can build on Dr Brier's achievements and take Kids forward.

The role:

- Work with trustees to develop and implement strategies and ethical business practices that reflect Kids mission, aims and values
- Maintain a culture of best practice throughout Kids that provides high quality services and champions diversity and equality
- Ensure that Kids operates within agreed financial parameters
- Maintain robust performance management and staff development strategies that reward and encourage success

The Person:

- Degree level education
- At least 5 successful years at director level delivering top quality services in a highly regulated sector
- A self-starter who can easily establish credibility with staff and volunteers
- Experience of working closely and consultatively with Boards and committees

To apply please visit www.csearchandselection.com/crss-kids or call Allan Hulse on 020 7520 2212. For more information please visit www.kids.org.uk or call Olga Johnson on 020 7520 2210. Closing date: 7th November 2005.

Kids embraces diversity and welcomes applications from under represented groups. Disabled applicants who meet the person specification will be interviewed



Experienced Project Manager

We are seeking a skilled, knowledgeable and motivated individual to run The Get into London Theatre Audience Development Project. This is a three year initiative funded by the London Development Agency, which aims to improve accessibility and communicate the diversity of London Theatre. It is essential that the applicant has an understanding of theatre and the issues surrounding access, and at least three years project management experience.

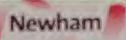
Salary: £34,000 pro rata on a freelance contract for 2.5 days per week
Initial Contract: 1 year with the option to extend for a further 2 years
Closing Date: 4 November 2005

Please send a covering letter and CV to the Development office, The Society of London Theatre, 32 Rose Street, London, WC2E 9ET. For the project specification and job brief, please contact kate@solitma.co.uk or call 0207 557 6700.

SOLT actively encourages applications from disabled and deaf people. If you would define yourself as a disabled or deaf person and meet the basic criteria for the post, you will be offered an interview.



STRATFORD CITY



To apply for the position of Chair:

Please submit a copy of your CV or resume marked for the attention of Mark Wenlock to:
access.panel@stanhopeplc.com

or post to the above c/o
Stanhope Plc
Norfolk House
31 St James Square
London SW1Y 4JJ

Closing date for applications:
11 November 2005
Interviews held in November

Chair of Consultative Access Group

Stratford City Developments Ltd, a consortium comprising Westfield, Aldersgate, Multiplex and Stanhope, is working in partnership with London & Continental Railways to transform one of the biggest disused inner city sites in London. Stratford City will be a major new urban generating 14m sq ft of mixed uses including 4,500 new homes.

We are looking for an independent expert of acknowledged high calibre and experience in the field of disabled access. A working knowledge of regulatory and inclusive design standards, relevant policies and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is essential.

The Consultative Access Group will comprise a core group of six members drawn from the GLA, LBN, Stratford City Access Group and developer teams, together with up to four specialist members. All meetings will take place in Stratford.

The Chair will provide a written summary of the views of the Panel on the proposals presented at the meeting, providing as far as possible a consensus of the views expressed.

Your involvement is likely to entail typically 2/3 days per quarter but more during the early stages of the project. Remuneration to be agreed. The submission of 'Reserved Matters' for the first phase are anticipated in mid 2006 and completion in 2010.

HAVERING COLLEGE

OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Havering College (FHE) is a highly regarded and successful further education institutions. We are committed to quality and currently provide a wide range of programmes to approximately 13,000 students and 6,200 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE).



**Curriculum Manager -
Mental Health and Learning
Difficulty Studies**

**Circa £33,000 - £36,000 p.a.
depending on qualifications and experience
Full-time**

Ref: CMLDS/AC

We are looking for a suitably qualified Curriculum Manager to take responsibility for the management of our current programmes in Mental Health and Learning Difficulty Studies. These include BSc (Hons) in Learning Difficulty Studies, and BSc (Hons) Mental Health Studies with Counselling. You will also be expected to lead on the development of a range of additional degree programmes in the near future.

You will hold a relevant first degree, and must possess an appropriate postgraduate degree, or be nearing completion. A recognised teaching qualification is required, though candidates without this will be considered if they are willing to undertake the PGCE course within two years of appointment. You must also have relevant professional experience in the sector, and relevant experience in course administration and aptitude to motivate and supervise others.

For further details and an application form, please contact the HR Department, Havering College of Further and Higher Education, Ardleigh Green Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 2LL. Tel: 01708 462854 (24 hour answerphone), quoting the above reference number. Alternatively, email: personnel@havering-college.ac.uk

Unfortunately, CVs alone will not be accepted as a formal application for this post.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications: 11 November 2005.

The College is working towards equal opportunities and positively welcome applications from suitably experienced individuals irrespective of racial origin, sex or disability.

DEADLINE

DN Extra November 2005 published 12 November.
Classified deadlines: Booking and copy: 2 November.

Disability Now December 2005 published 26 November.
Classified deadlines: Booking: 11 November. Copy: 15 November.

Exciting new Leadership roles at International Charity.

Location: Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Competitive packages

Our vision is of a world where no one is needlessly blind and where people who are blind enjoy the same rights as people with sight. Each year we improve the lives of millions of people in the poorest parts of the world. Sight Savers is growing rapidly and offers a great place to work within easy reach of London and Brighton.

Following a period of significant growth and exciting expansion plans for the future we have created two new leadership level positions to join our existing senior management team both reporting directly to the Chief Executive.

**Director of Strategic
Planning & Information**

The Role

- Lead the process of strategic planning involving key stakeholders as appropriate.
- Help establish clear global performance measures and how best to monitor and report on these.
- Identify organisational information requirements and develop and implement a global strategy for the collection and management of information.

The Person

- High intellect and sound judgement combined with strategic ability, vision and excellent communication skills.
- Strong background in strategic planning.
- International experience ideally in developing countries with strong relationship building skills.
- Proven managerial record at senior management level including strategy development and implementation.

**Director of Human
Resources Development**

The Role

- Implement a global HR strategy, helping to establish a culture and set of organisational values appropriate to our mission.
- Provide a high quality HR service globally, with a particular emphasis on developing skills and competencies of our staff across the world.
- Lead the internal communications function, to ensure employees across the world can readily share information and learn from each other.
- Oversee organisational reward strategy including pension provision.

The Person

- Proven HR experience at a senior level including strategy development and implementation, reward processes and pensions.
- Strong leadership qualities combined with high intellect, sound judgement and excellent communication skills.
- CIPD qualified.
- International experience ideally in developing countries with an awareness of cultural sensitivities and strong relationship building skills.

For an application pack, please email hr@sightsavers.org (or telephone on 01444 446704) or phone Caroline Harper, CEO, for an informal discussion on 01444 446652.

Closing date: Monday 14th November 2005.

For more information about Sight Savers International see our website at www.sightsavers.org

sightsavers
INTERNATIONAL

As an equal opportunities employer we actively encourage applications from all sections of the community.



Registered Charity No. 207544



WECIL

**West of England Centre
for Inclusive Living**

- 35 hours per week
- Generous contributory pension
- 30 days leave

For application packs
please contact:

Diana Morgan
WECIL Ltd.
Leinster Avenue
Knowle
Bristol BS4 1AR
Tel: 0117 903 8900
(Voice and minicom)
e-mail:
reception@wecil.co.uk

WECIL is a local organisation fully managed by Disabled People working to make a real difference to the lives of Disabled People and their families by delivering empowering independent living services.

Advice Manager

35 hours per week • £28,809 - £32,143

We are looking for a person with a proven record of advice management, including welfare rights, independent living and advocacy, working at the cutting edge of social policy development.

You will need to inspire an experienced and committed staff team and communicate effectively with a range of agencies at local, regional and national levels. You will need to have a firm commitment to applying the principles of independent living and the social model of disability, along with knowledge and commitment to other equality issues.

Closing date for applications: 25th November 2005

WECIL particularly encourages applications from under-represented groups (eg. Disabled People, people from Black and minority ethnic groups, Lesbians and Gay Men).

DN disabilitynow

layout sub-editor / web manager

£23,959-£26,721 (incl. ILW)

A superb sub-editor is needed to produce sparkling copy and outstanding designs for the UK's leading disability publication. You will help highlight a huge range of issues through our fortnightly publications, from the latest legislation on assisted dying to the most accessible pubs in the UK. You will also be required to develop and maintain DN's fast-growing website (www.disabilitynow.org.uk). The successful candidate will be flexible and a self starter, with excellent people skills, an eye for detail and an in-depth knowledge of Quark.

DN encourages disabled people to apply and all candidates should be determined to campaign for the rights of disabled people.

You should have two years experience in a sub-editing role and NCTJ qualifications or equivalent. Ideally you should have web management experience, although training will be offered to the right candidate.

Contact lucy.howard@scope.org.uk, or telephone: 020 7619 7323 for an application form, disk or tape, to be returned by 11 November. Interviews are likely to take place between 23 and 25 November.

Disability Now is published by Scope in London (charity no: 208231).

MORE EXCLUSIVE OFFERS - Don't forget to have a look in *DN Extra* on 11 November and the *DN* website at www.disabilitynow.org.uk for your chance to win an MP3 player and a Sonus - 1XT radio.

LAST MONTH'S WINNERS

The winner of two tickets for *The Crucible* in the September issue was S.Dore from Oxford.

The winners of the Valuing People Clipart Collection CD were, in order, M.Todd from Cornwall, M.Miles from Letchworth, J.Warrior from Nottingham, E.Williams from E.Yorkshire and A.Hone from Nottingham.

The winner of the Verko lap board was S.Firth from Halifax.

to enter Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send for

FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or email the details to: fiona.mitchell@scope.org.uk

Hilton Blackpool ☐ Microserve ☐



terms & conditions • closing date for entrants: 18.11.05 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to *DN* staff or associates • Winners may be announced in *DN* • In association with Microwise Cookware and Hilton Blackpool. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐

DN next month

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 28 November

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Campaigners discuss the controversial bill

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As 2006 approaches, *DN* asks readers which campaigns should stay or go

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COMEDY DINNER AND HOTEL DEAL



Thanks to the Hilton Blackpool, four *DN* readers can win tickets to attend an interactive dining show where they will become part of the cast of *Joey & Maria's Comedy Italian Wedding*. Dinner tickets are worth £39 Sunday to Thursday and £59 Friday and Saturday. The prize also includes an overnight stay at the hotel and one bottle of wine per couple. Winners can stay in a double or twin room (subject to availability), which normally cost £80 to £160. The American smash hit show has been described as a cross between *The Sopranos* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. This is a show "not to be missed" according to *Tatler* magazine and "the funniest theatrical spectacle to hit this country in quite a while" according to the *Irish Independent*. The winners must be able to attend the dinner show between 10 and 23 (not 17) December.

For your chance to win tick 'Hilton Blackpool' in the entry form.

Hilton Blackpool is also offering readers the chance to purchase tickets at £39 for every ticket if you book before 1 November. To find out more and order tickets telephone the Hilton Blackpool on 01253 749 781 or visit www.joeyandmariawedding.co.uk



MICROSERVE YOUR COOKING



Microwise Cookware is giving away Microserve units to 20 *DN* readers, worth £5.99 each, to enable you to handle ready meals more easily.

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To win a Microserve unit tick 'Microserve' in the entry form.

Microwise offers a free information pack with tips and hints on microwave cooking plus details of special offers on direct ordering anything from

its extensive product range. Just call 01869 244 884 or email: sales@microwisecookware.co.uk, leaving your name, address and quoting 'Free Guide'.



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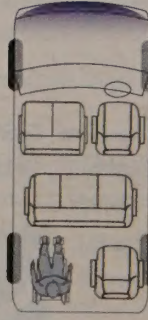


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Jobs

p41-46 and on our website: www.disabilitynow.org.uk